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THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

# CLARA DE MONTFIER,

A MORAL TALE.

*WITH ORIGINAL POEMS.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

515

*RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED*

TO THE

*Right Hon. Lady Charlotte Greville.*

BY

ELIZABETH ANNE LE NOIR,

AUTHOR OF

VILLAGE ANECDOTES.

VOL. III.

*READING:*

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THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL
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# CHAPTER I.

## THE RETURNING PRODIGAL.

Clara's wound did not prove to be of any consequence, and the excellence of her temper no less than of her constitution, contributing to a speedy cure, at the expiration of three days, the Surgeon pronounced that she might pursue her journey in safety.

It had been judged prudent, and was not at all difficult to conceal from

Clara the name of the delinquent.— Of all persons she never would have suspected Louisot; and her well known regard for his family, and particular concern for him, would necessarily have given her infinite pain, had she been unguardedly apprised of it.

The youth on his part suffered much more in mind than in body; and when questioned as to his health, always answered that it was far too good. The attentions paid him by the Baron and his family, still sharpened the stings of his own poignant remorse. Nor would the bitterest reproaches have wounded him half so keenly. He prayed for death, and observed with unaffected distress the favorable state of his wounds which youth and strength were hourly contributing to ameliorate, in spite of the anguish of his spirit.

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The Baron de Montfier observing his despair, and ignorant as yet, how much his fault admitted of extenuation; made it his business to seek in the neighbourhood for some Ecclesiastic of eminence, who might speak comfort to the afflicted penitent. Such an one was found; and Louisot being assured that his crime was not beyond the bounds of mercy; and encouraged with parental tenderness, to return to the path, which though he had quitted, he had never ceased to regret, again ventured to lift up his eyes from the dust, and to open his heart to hope and consolation.——His recovery now went on apace and the family arrived at the hotel of Madame de Blanville, without further mischance.

Monsieur de Montfier's next care was to write the good Curé a circumstantial account of the extraordinary occurrences

of the journey. The particular circumstance relative to Louisot he did not fail to relate, leaving to the well known discretion of his friend to publish or suppress any part, as in his judgment, he should find expedient.

He requested him to give orders that the vaults of the Castle should be immediately secured; with as little alarm as possible to the inhabitants; and to assure them for their further tranquility; that he should defer his return no longer, than his daughter's complete recovery.

Although the tongue of Mademoiselle Therese, had repeatedly itched to divulge the adventure of Louisot to her young lady; yet the injunctions of her master had hitherto kept it within bounds.—— To make herself amends however, for

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this insupportable restraint, she related the tale of wonder, wherever she went, and if it was not known to all Paris in four and twenty hours, it was no fault of hers.

The youth frequently questioned relative to the circumstances of his case, was not backward in relating them. He told his story always with candor and simplicity, and never without tears, and the bitterest reflections on himself.

The Baron having heard some of the particulars, was desirous to be informed of the whole, and finding in it, so much to excuse, and so much to pity; assured the culprit not only of his forgiveness, but protection. "It shall be my care," said he, "to present thee to our worthy pastor, and thy good parents: all will receive with transport their returning prodigal.

We will look thee out a wife, and thou shalt wander no more."

The youth, bursting into tears, declared himself unworthy of happiness or peace. " I mean Sir," said he, " with the approbation of our good Curé, to retire indeed to La Trappe, it is the only fit asylum for a wretch such as I."

" No violent resolutions, my good friend," returned the Baron, " they are always to be suspected. The best proof you can give of a sincere return to virtue, is an implicit obedience to direction which till you quitted you never went astray—You may yet be a very useful, a very worthy—I will add, a very happy member of society—your example to others will be worth a thousand precepts. You have fallen so low, I trust

only to rebound the higher.——I always loved thee, Louisot," said the Baron, taking his hand, "I cannot spare thee, my son."

At these affectionate words Louisot fell at his feet, hid his face with his hands, and sobbed aloud. The Baron much affected, bade the youth prepare to join his family, and left the room.

When the servants were assembled at dinner, Therese who though incapable of ill nature, yet from thoughtlessness too often indulged her itch of talking at the expence of other peoples feelings; suddenly desired the young man to get up and make her one of his best bows.

"For had it not been for me," continued she, "my young lady would

have surprized you at the Baron's feet this morning — she was just going to speak with him, when I stept forward and prevented her—had she seen you, all must have come out you know; and then what would you have done!"

Louisot deeply blushing, hung his head and said, he believed he never should have risen any more.

Mademoiselle Fanchon, the housekeeper here observed, that she thought the young lady had better be informed of the truth at once, as sooner or later, it would necessarily come to her knowledge.

Poor Louisot, who dreaded nothing so much as the accomplishment of this prediction, suffered yet so cruelly, between the hope of concealing his de-

linquency, and the perpetual fear of its being revealed; that he was sometimes on the point of soliciting an audience of Clara, to denounce himself to her, and implore her pity and forgiveness. Accident favoured a design, which although he had frequently meditated he never else would have had the courage to have put in execution.

One day returning from an airing with her aunt, somewhat sooner than usual, Clara passed through the anti-room, where Louisot, secure that she was not in the house, had been some time waiting the commands of her father—She would probably, in her total ignorance of his history, have past him without notice, had not the violent emotion he betrayed caught her attention; hardly believing her eyes, she exclaimed——

"Good Heavens! it is Louisot — What distresses you my good friend? — Have you not seen my father?"——

The youth, trembling and abashed, sunk on his knees and hid his face.— Clara more and more astonished, yet suspecting no other cause for his emotion than the fear of having given offence by his abrupt departure from the Village, endeavored by the kindest expressions to encourage, and to console him.

"No one is offended with you my poor Louisot," continued she, "every body was concerned at your departure, and will of course rejoice at your return. I am sure my papa will be delighted to see you, and will render you any service in his power: and as for my best offices, you may command them."

As he still remained silent, more wounded by her kindness, than had she uttered the bitterest reproaches; and was now sobbing aloud; she continued to expostulate with him, to say, how well she had lately left all his friends; how much his mother regretted him; that she came weeping to the Castle, on the eve of their departure from it, and said, "dear Mademoiselle! Oh! if you could but hear of my poor boy at Paris!"—And how little she herself thought of so unlikely a thing's coming to pass.—"I would not say a word," added Clara, "to damp the hope your poor mother appeared to entertain; but indeed I thought nothing less probable,—Oh! if you could but conceive half the joy it will be to your worthy friends, to know you safe and here, you never would give way to a dejection so wholly unaccountable— What can it mean?"

" Alas, Mademoiselle!" sobbed out at length the youth, " I am not the Louisot, your excellent family once honoured with their favor and protection. — I am an outcast from society — A robber! — A murderer! — Yes, Mademoiselle, the accursed wretch, whose hand has been lifted against his best benefactors—Even against you! most innocent, most virtuous of women!"—

" What strange incoherencies are these?" said Clara, not yet comprehending the mystery, " you have lost your senses, my poor Louisot;"—

" I have lost much more, Mademoiselle," replied falteringly the youth, " Oh! if you find it so hard only to believe my guilt, how will you ever find it possible to forgive? — Alas! Mademoiselle you alone are ignorant of the cruel truth.—

"You see before you the guilty wretch who shed your blood — Oh! could the anguish of this moment, but atone my crime!—for I believe no rack could inflict torture like that I endure, in thus denouncing myself to you as the worst of villains!—I should prefer your esteem to the empire of the universe, and have reduced myself to the ignominy of declaring to you, that I am deserving of worse than contempt—of execration!"

The tears chaced each other unwiped down the cheeks of Clara, as she listened in unspeakable astonishment, to the self accusations of Louisot.

"If you have injured no one but me," she rejoined as soon as she could speak, "your fault is light, and your peace easily made.—Whatever may have

been your errors, so deep a sense of them, will surely atone to Heaven — should I, who have so much need of mercy dare to shew less? — You have my pity, my prayers, and my most sincere forgiveness. —— When you are less affected, I shall be glad to hear more of your story, I am sure you are not so guilty as your natural horror of wrong, and the virtuous habits of your early life, lead you to apprehend. — Be comforted, my poor Louisot, *a tout peché misericorde.**

At this juncture the Baron appeared, calling upon Louisot to attend him.

"Oh! my father," exclaimed Clara," what a discovery is this, and why was it concealed from me?——Could you think

* There is mercy for all sin.

me capable of being implacable towards a poor culprit, who stands so much in need of pity and forgiveness? His wound is far more grievous than mine."

"No, my child," answered the Baron, "but we dreaded the effect your concern for a worthy family, might have taken upon your health during the doubtful state of your wound: and since your recovery the unhappy aggressor has been so earnest to have it still concealed, that we could not refuse him his request.—He has suffered too acutely from the reproaches of his own ingenuous mind, not to be entitled to every alleviation from such as could enter into his feelings."

"You then forgive him, my dear papa?" said Clara, embracing her father.

"Surely, my child," replied the Baron, "what right have we to withhold pardon for sincere repentance, and thus act against our daily prayers? Of your indulgence towards the unhappy culprit, I never for a moment doubted.——His heart has bled a thousand drops for every one his unlucky hand drew from you. His intentions, even at the fatal moment, were guiltless; while under Heaven, by his immediate desertion of his comrades, he was perhaps the means of saving us all. —— Follow me to my chamber Clara, and you shall hear the particulars of his momentary fall—all of which have been satisfactorily explained, except the first

false step, of quitting the protection of his natural friends, and the asylum of his native mountains; which is still a mystery the poor youth seems unwilling to divulge. I have not pressed the question, as it seems to give him pain,—he has been so candid and ingenuous in every other point, that a little reserve may be forgiven him on this one"—

The Baron fixed his eyes on Louisot, as in uttering these last words he quitted the room; this appeared to increase the embarrassment and distress of the latter, which Clara observing, bade him good day, in a tone of the kindest solicitude and hurried away.

"Ah! why is she so adorable?" said Louisot, now left alone, "and how could

it be, that virtue so lovely, should have caused me to plunge into the deepest abyss of vice?—Ah, me! what wonder, that such as hide and fly from the sun, should stumble into precipices, as they wander in shades and utter darkness?—No, never again, sweet star of the morning, will I quit the sphere, where thou shinest supreme in beauty and in brightness.—"

From this moment Louisot felt his heart relieved of an intolerable burthen: he no longer dreaded, but anxiously desired to return to his parental roof.—Clara's eye had smiled forgiveness upon him, and he could face all others.—His first care was, nevertheless, to repair to the nearest church, there to pour forth his heart in thanksgiving for this so unmerited a mercy.

The church indeed, was the only public place that during his short abode in Paris, he ever could be prevailed upon to enter. There he was constant and assiduous; often declaring, that nothing afforded him such consolation, as to be once more admitted within its walls.

" I cannot conceive, my dear child," said the Baron to Clara, after relating the little history of Louisot's wanderings, " what could have induced the poor youth to quit his family. To my repeated interrogations, I never could obtain a direct answer, and when at last I urged him more peremptorily, he fell at my feet and conjured me to spare the avowal.—Yet what could be the disgust that urged him to so violent a measure, I own I am at a loss to devise."

"It was perhaps," answered Clara, "merely a little youthful levity, and curiosity to see the world. The lighter the motive that led to such fatal effects the more he is ashamed of it.—I think his reserve very natural and very excusable—it will perhaps, be better to urge him no further upon the subject."

## CHAPTER II.

JOURNIES IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS.

It is high time to say a few words of Mr. Forrest, who from the moment he knew of Clara's misfortune, had not ceased to reflect bitterly on his own rashness, which had first brought on the attack and been its indirect cause: knowing little of Louisot, and not himself of an inquisitive temper, he had been but slightly interested about him; while his habitual reserve, depriving him of the

relief which attends a communication of suffering, it preyed upon his heart, and overspread his countenance with gloom. For the first few days after the accident, the Baron was far too anxious on his daughter's account, to be very observant of his friend; but when resuming their journey, they were continually together, he could not but remark his silence, his melancholy, and his desponding air; while the Presidente, on her part, frequently complained, that the dull, phlegmatic Englishman gave her the vapors.

The state of Mr. Forrest's affairs required his presence in England; yet could he not prevail upon himself to determine on the journey there, till a witness of the perfect re-establishment of Clara.

On the eve of the day he had fixed upon for his departure, not meaning to take a formal leave of his friends, Mr. Forrest called as usual at the hôtel of Madame de Blanville, and found that Lady just setting out, to take her niece an airing in the woods of Boulogne; she offered him a seat in the carriage, which he very readily accepted.

When they alighted to walk, in vain did he seek an opportunity of entertaining Clara an instant in private. Her aunt secured him by the arm, tormenting him with the most unwelcome attentions; while, to add to his mortification, Clara enjoying the beauty of the woods, which as the autumn had been unusually dry, displayed the richest variety of shades and colouring, tript on before, leaving him to the uninterrupted enjoyment of his tete-a-tete. The

little ill-humor occasioned by his disappointment, added to the concern of his departure, did not render him a more entertaining companion on the ride home; and he made his bow on taking leave, without uttering a single word. Although fits of absence and silence were so usual with him, yet could not Clara avoid remarking this; and she mentioned it at dinner to her father; observing, that she feared Mr. Forrest was chagrined or unwell.

"Pooh, pooh!" said the Presidente, "he is only stupid; but that is a matter too usual with him to be worthy of remark.—I wonder for my part, what my brother can find in him to be so fond of.—Azor, my little dog, is a thousand times better company."

"If you knew Mr. Forrest as well as

I do sister," replied the Baron, "you would find in him, subject both for love and admiration: you would respect even the absence and silence which you call stupidity. His philanthropy is so universal, and his benevolence so active, that I am always ready to conclude when I see him musing and inattentive to the present company, that he is occupied with some plan of service for the absent."

The next day, the Baron de Montfier seized an early opportunity of calling upon his friend; and was informed at his lodgings, that he had taken post for Calais, that very morning; he was then at no loss to account for his preceding dejection.

Monsieur de Montfier had paid his respects to the young Marchioness du

Plessis, while his daughter was yet convalescent, and unable to accompany him. The Lady received him at her toilette like a goddess, surrounded by adorers: she nevertheless vouchsafed him some distinction, and regretted not seeing his daughter with an air of such sincerity and earnestness, that he almost forgave the little interest she expressed about her own.

Clara, who was eager to hear a description of a Lady who made so much noise, was speedily gratified with an opportunity of judging for herself; for politely waving the French ceremonial, of expecting the first visit from the last comer, she waited upon Mademoiselle de Montfier as early as possible, after understanding that she was well enough to receive company.

Clara already prejudiced in her favor, by this instance of good nature and attention, was struck with her beauty, and charmed with her vivacity.

" I was sensibly mortified, Madame," said she, after the usual compliments, " to have been deprived of the pleasure of delivering to you in person an account of the perfect health, and daily improvement of your charming little daughter; for I feel for a mother's anxiety."

" You are too good, Mademoiselle," answered the Marchioness, bursting into a loud laugh, " to remind me of her— I protest I was near forgetting that there was such a thing in the world— nay, do not look so grave.—When you are a little better acquainted with the pleasures of Paris, you will not be surprized that they put every thing else

it of one's head. I shall be too hap-
y to introduce you to them—but we
ust find you a husband in the first
lace, for unmarried young ladies, labor
ere, under a very disagreeable degree
f restraint; nevertheless under the pro-
ection of the Presidente your aunt, who
flatter myself, will often honor my
ttle *coteries* with her presence; her
harming niece may venture to display
er attractions without any danger to
erself; though with an infinite deal
the men she will captivate, and the
omen she will eclipse."

After running on a great deal more,
nd hardly suffering any one else to
peak, even while she took breath; the
oung Marchioness suddenly started from
er seat, embraced Clara, assured her of
er eternal friendship, and was half way
own stairs, before any one had time to

ring for her carriage. Before the company had recovered their surprize, she returned.

" What a giddy creature am I!" she exclaimed, as she entered the saloon, " My dear Mademoiselle de Montfier, how could I possibly forget to congratulate you on your marvellous escape? Oh! good Heavens!—Shot at, and wounded by Banditti! — The very sight of them would have killed me, — but you are quite a heroine for a tragedy or an epic poem — To be sure you will never venture back again through that terrible forest? — Well, — once more adieu, I shall be dying, till Madame your Aunt brings you to return my visit."—

She then sprang out of the room without waiting for an answer —

"The young Marchioness is very charming," said Madame de Blanville,—"Nevertheless, she is far from being the beauty I was led to expect,—*Peste!* What a mouth!—it would make two of mine—and her nose is very long; and her skin very dark indeed.—She owes her reputation, I believe, to her youth and novelty.—*Peste!* I have seen much handsomer women;" continued the Presidente, adjusting her head-dress in the glass.

"I do not think I ever did," said Clara, "but indeed, I have seen but little, her vivacity is highly fascinating, and would almost blind observers to the absence of more solid qualifications,—Or perhaps, it only conceals them."—

The Baron de Montfier, remained at Paris, but a few days longer; his sister,

whom he a little overawed, though she both loved and respected him, saw the time fixed for his departure approach without feeling much regret: not so the Baron; on the eve of quitting his darling daughter for the first time, he was most sensibly affected.——

" I leave you my dearest sister," said he to Madame de Blanville, " what I prize most in the world — guard my treasure as you value me. — I shall require an account of it at the expiration of the bad season; when I hope to embrace you again."—

" I hope you will not think of requiring it again so soon?" resumed the Presidente, " *Peste!* that would be miserly indeed. — Do you know that I hope to find my niece a suitable match

long ere that, and to settle her near me for good?—You can have no objection to a man of fortune and distincton for a son-in-law?—I have one in my eye already."

"I should perhaps," replied the Baron, "have objections peculiar to myself, and that would never occur to you. I shall be very unwilling to leave my daughter with you if you do not engage, to enter into no such negociation without consulting me."

"Pooh! pooh!" returned the lady, "We women always manage such matters best —*Peste!* have I not made an excellent marriage for my own daughter?—Sure you may trust me for yours."

The Baron here dropt the subject to his sister, but on parting with Clara, was very particular in his instructions how to conduct herself, in case any

match should be proposed to her acceptance.

"On every other account my child," said he, "I am perfectly at ease; but do not suffer either the persuasions of others or your own heart, to mislead you, in a matter of such importance—Refer every thing to me; except in cases where you may think proper to give a decided negative; which I authorize you to do whenever your judgment shall so direct."

Of the Presidente's only daughter, and her husband, Monsieur du Quesnoy; we have as yet said nothing, nor is there much to say. The latter although a Councellor in the Parliament of Paris, was a man of very moderate abilities: He knew a little latin, and still less of the law, it was his business to dispense.

On this occasion, and to some of our readers, it may not perhaps be superfluous to observe, that the French Parliaments were totally dissimilar to ours; they were Courts of judicature, and judged the laws, they had no concern whatever in forming. In this one point however they agreed, that persons of the meanest extraction, and lowest abilities might purchase seats there, and acquire consequence by so doing.—In France they either gave or implied nobility.

Madame du Quesnoy was one of those every day characters which afford no prominent features, and can only be described by negation. She was neither handsome nor ugly; neither sensible nor foolish neither good nor bad.—She was however extremely fashionable: and ruled by the *ton* not only as to her dress and deportment; but likewise as to her prin-

ciples and opini ;— This had directed the manner of her reception of the Baron de Montfer and his daughter, which if not very cordial was strictly decorous. In short this couple were of those necessary units which with figures before them, help to make up a sum; and are therefore so indispensible in the formation of large assemblies:—they were part of a numerous company, that supped with the Presidente on the eve of the Baron's departure, and whose loud and unrestrained gaiety but ill accorded with the feelings of a father and daughter, so tenderly attached, and on the point of being separated for the first time.

When the party at length broke up and Clara after taking leave of her father, was hurrying to her apartment; her eyes swimming in tears and covered

with her handkerchief, she almost stumbled against a person who stood near the door in her passage; the noise made in attempting to avoid her, caused her to look round; and she discovered Louisot, stealing gently away to elude her observation. He had posted himself in the anti-room, to catch a view of her and to call down blessings on her head as she passed by;

"I beg pardon, Mademoiselle," said he, finding himself discovered, and dropping on his knee;" I—I—I was waiting——"

"To see Thèrése, I suppose?" said Clara faintly, "well, I am glad *I* have seen you, to assure you of my good will—I shall hope to find you married and settled, on my return:—What do you think of your old neighbour Suzette,

Louisot? —She had the prize of industry since you have been gone."

"I shall think of her, if you command it, Mademoiselle," said Louisot; — "but how I talk! — What worthy girl would ever think of *me?*"

"I perhaps could manage that," replied Clara; "In the mean time, live up to your principles, do nothing without the advice of your excellent Pastor, and always depend upon me as a friend. — God bless you Louisot! I wish you a good Journey —— take great care of my father, and farewell."

Clara pronounced these last words in a tremulous voice, for her separation from her father, hung heavy at her heart. Louisot sunk on the earth imploring blessings upon her, and the scene closed.

## CHAPTER III.

SCENE CHANGES TO MONTFIER.

Early the next morning the travellers proceeded on their journey; the Baron taking Louisot with him in his carriage, and so ordering his stages as never to be late on the road; for he considered, that there was a possibility of being way-laid by the banditti, who, of course would be desperate in their attacks, with a view either to destroy Louisot or get him again into their power.

They passed the fatal forest long ere night fall; but shuddered on recognizing the memorable spot dyed with the innocent blood of Clara. The Baron could not refrain a glance at his companion, who hid his face and groaned aloud. The sound of a horn at a distance soon after roused their attention; Louisot started from his reverie and prepared for resistance, but some huntsmen soon after passing very peaceably, explained the cause; and they proceeded without accident or further alarm, to Saumur where they were met by the Baron's servants with horses.

As they approached the village, Louisot's heart beat quick, and mingled pain and pleasure swelled it almost to bursting.—He was in his father's arms without being conscious of it. His mother,

sisters and brothers were hanging about him; he saw delight in every countenance, and was convinced that the good Curé had faithfully kept his secret.

"Oh! that I could conceal it from myself," ejaculated he inwardly, as he embraced his family and bedewed their cheeks with tears.—"Welcome, our prodigal!" said his father, "We have killed for thee the fatted calf, my boy; and all our neighbours are coming to partake."

Louisot would willingly have been spared this appearance of triumph on his return; his heart smote him as unworthy of it, and his consequent dejection, damped all the expected festivity.—They supped, and Louisot not even then recovering his spirits his mother could no longer forbear reproaching him.

"Why, how is this, my son?" said she, "it should seem thou wert sorry to see us again. Every one is merry, and thou art as dull as can be.—Why, hadst thou come home to mine or thy father's funeral, just such a countenance would have beseemed thee."

"Alas! mother," returned the youth, "I cannot bear to be treated so much better than I deserve. Did you know what a disgrace I have been to an honest family, you never would look upon me again."

"We know thou hast been a prodigal, my son," said the old man, "but we have learned of our good Curè how a returning prodigal is to be received. Come, let us hear thy adventures, if thy repentance is sincere, whatever thy transgressions, they will be forgiven on high;

and so they will be here.—To see thee again amongst us, is such pleasure; there is nothing I could not forgive thee.—Oh! Louisot, didst thou but know how many tears thy absence has cost thy poor mother?—I did not weep like a woman, Louisot; perhaps, it would have been better for me if I had.—It grieved me here, Louisot;" continued Guilloit, laying his hand upon his heart. "But all is forgotten now, my boy, that we see thee returned safe and well. Let us hear thy confession, and all shall be forgiven too.—Come, Louisot, it will amuse us, my son."

Louisot wiped away the tears his father's kindness had extorted, and prepared to do as he was desired, observing by way of preface, that he submitted to the shame of an avowal as to a part of the punishment he so justly de-

served. He then related his story with the exactest candour and simplicity; except that he softened as much as possible the delinquency of Henriot, and totally suppressed the motives of his own flight. Never was audience more attentive or more indulgent. All agreed that circumstanced as he was, it was hardly possible for a youth so inexperienced to have escaped the dangers that beset him. None blamed him but for leaving the village; nor did the old folks miss so good an opportunity of enlarging upon the folly and danger of withdrawing from an asylum, so fenced against the snares and wickedness of the world.

Louisot's adventures were speedily made the subject of a ballad, which needed not smooth versification or fine music to become popular in the village; it was

adapted to a favorite old tune, and sung by men, women, and children.

Meanwhile the return of the benevolent master had been greeted at the Castle, and indeed all over the village, with joy as ardent as it was sincere. His sons, who at first could not articulate for joy, were in a quarter of an hour as incapable of being silent.—Monsieur du Plessis, was at the Castle to welcome the Baron, and Mademoiselle Fréron at the head of the servants, had a long tale to relate of the terrors they had undergone, from the knowledge of so dangerous a line of communication with a horde of banditti; for although the vaults had been immediately secured under the Curé's own eye, on the receipt of the Baron's letter; and a watch set every night; yet was it im-

possible to any of them to rest in peace in the absence of the master.

"I am positive, Monsieur," said the housekeeper, "that the thieves have made several attempts upon the Castle. I have heard, with my own ears, such whistlings and rustlings, and noises, that I have many times been ready to think they were behind the tapestry, or between the rafters and boards—and sat tremble, tremble—expecting to see them rush out every moment—but now you are returned, we shall once more think ourselves secure."

Monsieur de Montfier thanked his housekeeper for the confidence she reposed in him, and having addressed each of his servants in turn, with some kind question, proceeded himself, to inspect the state of the entrance to the

vaults, and being satisfied that it might stand a regular siege, he gave himself up to the satisfaction of feeling once more at his own home, surrounded by his children, and hardly less devoted vassals and dependants, all looking up to him as to a tutelary angel.

"You, my sons," said he to Basil and Isidore, "must endeavour to atone to me for the absence of your sister, and for this you must be almost as good."

"That is a hard task you set us, papa," said the eldest, "and who is to make us amends? Constance is too little."

The black nurse here making her appearance with her little charge, pointed out to the Baron's observation, how much it grew and improved under her

care; and setting the child upon the ground to show how firm she was upon her feet; the young gentlemen did not disdain to amuse themselves with her and her toys, for all she was so little. The Baron observed their sport with the delight of a fond father; praised his sons for their attention to the helpless Constance, and produced some new toys in reward of it from Paris.

The next day the Baron and the Curé had a conference with Louisot on the measures to be taken for apprehending the thieves, and ridding the vicinage of such dangerous neighbours. As the latter seemed very unwilling to turn informer, Monsieur du Plessis was urgent to convince him that it was his indispensible duty: that the only atonement he could make to God and to society, for having been a temporary member of

so unjust a league, was to do his utmost to break it asunder: and that it was even the greatest service he could render to those who formed it.—Poor Louisot recoiled at the idea of delivering up to justice, the generous La Vengeance or even the insidious Henriot. He asserted that it would be impossible to him to point out the intricate path to the recess; and that he was even ignorant of the forest wherein it was concealed. He nevertheless engaged to do his utmost towards facilitating the discovery; and in the mean time was wholly taken up with schemes to conciliate duties so opposite as those which friendship and morality seemed in this case to enjoin.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A PERSUIT.

The Marquis du Plessis, arriving at Montfier about this time, to see his little girl and Friends, in his way to Paris, whither he was going to spend part of the winter, was of course made acquainted with the extraordinary events, that had so recently taken place; and consulted as to the means most expedient for securing, or, at least for dispersing the banditti. He readily agreed to send a de-

tachment of his regiment on the expedition, if Louisot would undertake to be their guide; but to this the youth felt a repugnance, which, although he could not help betraying, he was ashamed to own.

After passing several restless nights, while the business was in agitation, it at length occurred to him to send a written notice to the Captain, to a house where he knew Henriot was accustomed to resort; apprizing him that their retreat was discovered, that an armed force was coming against them, and that their only safety was in flight.

" My friends," said he, in the letter, " have promised me, that the man, whom in spite of his unjust profession, I cannot cease to love and admire, shall not be delivered up to justice. I kno

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I can rely upon their word; as far it depends on them to keep it: But it may perhaps not be in their power. Else, how gladly would I offer you the Asylum, which has been so friendly to me!—Where you would speedily be convinced, that piety and probity are not empty names, and embrace with open arms, that lovely form of virtue, for which your noble heart was framed."

He writ to Henriot to the same effect, and being acquainted with an address which would not expose them, gave the letters to the Charge of the servant who usually went to the post town.

The Marquis du Plessis having heard of the defile, by which the robbers had made their escape with the horses, stolen at the wolf hunt, employed Bona-

venture and La Roche to find it out. For several days their most diligent Search was ineffectual, and they were at length indebted to accident for its discovery: One of their dogs having chaced a stag through the thick underwood that concealed it, Bonaventure was too experienced a huntsman not to trace these animals: he followed, and ascertained the communication between the two forests; and thus discovered that which concealed the retreat of the theives.

This important point gained, it was determined to place a detachment of Soldiers to guard this pass, while others scoured the adjacent forest, and endeavoured to drive the Banditti to the snare prepared for them.

The Marquis du Plessis upon this, returned to Angiers in order to settle his plan of operations and procure the assistance of the civil power. He took Louisot with him, who was well pleased with the arrangement, as it procured him an opportunity of leaving himself, duplicates of his letters to the Captain and Henriot at another place of resort. Thus he flattered himself that he should satisfy both his honour and his conscience and that the band would be routed, without personal danger to his friends.

The Marquis du Plessis having imparted to the Commandant of Angiers, the business he was upon, was speedily furnished with credentials and assistance. Large bodies of troops were sent in several divisions the forest invested at the same time in different directions, and

the issue to that of Montfier defended by a strong guard.

The merit of discovering the Recess was however reserved for Bonaventure and his dog: on foot, as he had been accustomed to hunt in his native Wilderness, he beat about the bushes, — sometimes followed and sometimes guided by his sagacious, four-footed friend. At length they gained the Labyrinth which concealed the intricate pathway; but little observation was necessary to prove it the work or at least the improvement of art: Bonaventure shouted to his companions, and had soon a numerous company in his suite. The troops rushed eagerly on, mowing down every thing that opposed their way; and speedily arrived at the entrance of the subterraneous passage; where they halted for orders from their officers.

The Marquis du Plessis now arrived, and Louisot was summoned to be the pilot through this dark and winding way. The sensations the poor youth at this moment experienced, however distressing to him were not new; just so did his heart beat with contending emotions, when for the first time he engaged, an involuntary ruffian, by the side of La Vengeance; and thus again, when his trembling hand, drew the fatal trigger which had so nearly cost the life of her, he would have died to save!—

Endeavouring to stifle his feelings, and stun reflection, once more he rushed forward in desperation; yet observed, with inexpressible relief that the pass was not secured, as formerly.

"Oh, that my friend may have escaped!" he ejaculated; and elated with

the hope, rushed on the foremost; yet in a few minutes again his heart misgave him :—

" Oh, if he should still be here! — at least I shall be the first sacrificed; I never will defend me from his sword :— I will not live to see him dragged to an ignominious death — he will despise and execrate me; but my blood will have atoned for all!"

As he led on through the intricate windings, he arrived at another door which was likewise unbarred :—again his heart swelled with hope; he redoubled his pace, while the impatient soldiers, with frequent imprecations, enquired if he was leading to hell?

They arrived at the last door, that which opened to the valley; — it was

closed.—Louisot stopped; his heart beating with such violence, that he was utterly unable to proceed. His companions rushed by him; the door soon gave way to their efforts; he heard their shouts,—he even thought he heard the voice of his friend, — but he heard no more; the cold dews of death seemed upon him, and he sunk upon the earth, in a swoon.

Happily for Louisot, the Marquis was near him, or in the eagerness of the soldiers to rush forward, he must have been trampled to death. The voice of the commander could hardly stop them in their ardour to proceed. The Marquis ordered him to be assisted into the air, and he was conveyed to the valley—where there were none but friends.

He soon recovered, but was some minutes ere he was satisfied that the recess was indeed deserted. His relief was inexpressible, though not in proportion to his late distress:—Why are feeling minds more alive to pain than pleasure?—The fact is certain.

While the soldiers explored the spot with disappointed murmurs, the Marquis du Plessis was lost in admiration at its beauty and singularity. The cavern which Louisot had so carefully adorned, still shewed signs of cultivation. The latter roses were yet in bloom, and protected by the overshadowing mountain, flowers which had long disappeared every where else, still flourished here.

The Marquis approaching this spot, was struck with the name of Cla

carved in various devices upon the barks of several trees.—He glanced at Louisot's eye, which was following him; the youth blushed deeply, and cast it down; conviction flashed upon the mind of him whose feelings and inclinations had been so similar:—Nevertheless, far from being indignant at the discovery, the Marquis seemed touched with the tenderest sympathy; he took Louisot by the hand, and assured him of his friendship and protection.

The banditti had abandoned their retreat long before the notice sent by Louisot, which never reached any of them. A mutinous spirit had broke out soon after his desertion. The Captain was loudly censured for the distinction and indulgence he had shewn the youth. Distrust and dissentions ensued, while

they only agreed in the one point of continual apprehensions that they should be denounced by the youthful renegade. He, it was well known, was acquainted with the avenues leading to the Castle; thus, they might be attacked many ways at once. Suspicion prevailed, while peace and security fled this solitary abode, which could afford no other advantage. They parted their plunder, and each went their several way.

The Marquis du Plessis did not quit this natural fortress, without unfitting it, as much as possible, for the purpose it had served: the expedition was thus not wholly fruitless, for though disappointed as to the main object, the discovery of the banditti, it was yet successful in destroying their retreat, and ascertaining that they were probably dispersed and certainly removed from the vicinage.

The troops returned to their cantonments, and Louisot to his village, equally pleased that he had done his duty, and that he had done it in vain.

Meanwhile the Marquis du Plessis took the road to Paris, whither, if the reader is so disposed, he shall bear him company.

## CHAPTER V.

### A FASHIONABLE WIFE.

The young Marquis du Plessis, on his arrival at Paris, found a large company assembled at supper with his lady; who received, as she had parted with him, with careless gaiety, and no tenderness at all.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed she, perceiving him, "if here is not my husband!—the last person in the world I should have thought of:—Monsieur," to

him, "there is plenty of room at the other end of the table;—you need not crowd us here."

"Nay, my dear Adelaide," he whispered, "suffer me to tell you that the little Constance grows charmingly, and is the most interesting child in the world."

"So much the better," said the lady, aloud, "I am glad the air of the country agrees with her, as I have not the smallest inclination to bring her to Paris."

The Marquis little delighted with this speech, turned away, and observing among the crowd, Madame de Blanville and her neice, hastened to pay his devoirs to them.

"I am just returned from Montfier," said he to Clara; "surely a traveller from thence must needs be welcome?—Will you allow me, Mademoiselle, to say how lately I left your father and brothers in good health?—I have letters too."

"Oh, welcome indeed!" replied Clara; "they are then all well?—and your sweet little Constance, is she so likewise?"

The Marquis talked of his child, like a fond father, and having much to say, on that and other subjects, was going to take possession of a vacant chair near the ladies:—but Madame du Plessis called to him, that it belonged to the Count de Blaisel. In the same instant, a young man who had been talking to

some ladies at the other end of the table, drew near, and the Marquis bowing resigned his place.

"The ladies would perhaps prefer the company of Monsieur?" said the stranger, with the air of a man who did not think such a thing possible.

Clara who had a thousand enquiries to make of Montfier, and who was besides much disgusted with the conceited air and marked attentions of the Count de Blaisel, would indeed have very much preferred it, but her aunt was of another opinion, and with a complaisant air, requested the young Count to do them the honour of resuming his seat. The Marquis now took post behind the chair of Mademoiselle de Montfier, and

in vain looked round for the countenance of some other of his acquaintances or friends. Somewhat chagrined not to see his father, he enquired of his lady, if he was not well.

"Oh, he was very well a month ago," she replied; "we never interfere with each other's engagements: — however if he had been apprised of your return,— or rather, of Mademoiselle de Montfier's being here, we should probably have had the honour of his company: for he is over head and ears in love with her;——but I protest," added she, carelessly, "I never thought to send him word of it."

"It seems then, Mademoiselle," said the Marquis, returning to Clara, "that you have made a conquest of my father,

but so natural a consequence ought not to surprize me."

"Mademoiselle has as many slaves, as beholders," said the Count de Blaisel, taking snuff, with an air that seemed to say, "I myself do her the honour to be one of them."

In vain did the Marquis attempt to have some conversation with Clara, he was continually interrupted with unmeaning compliments, or insignificant observations, by her next neighbour; usually attended with sneers at others, or oblique references to his own very superior merit.

The supper being ended, the lady of the house called upon Monsieur de Blaisel for a song; he made some affected

excuses, but Clara, enforcing the request, not that she wished him to sing, but that she was glad of any thing that would divert him from speaking, he made an ostentatious merit of acceding to her request, and with some taste, and a great deal of conceit, gave his song. The Marchioness herself then sung a couplet, on purpose as she said to set her guests *en train.* Several of the gentlemen followed her with complimentary stanzas, composed for the occasion, and addressed to the lady of the mansion: she laughed at them all, and rising from table in the midst of one, gave her hand to the Chevalier de Liancourt and led to the card room, where numerous tables were placed in readiness. Here she arranged the parties, and Madame de Blanville sat down to *Riversi,* while Clara placed herself by her side:

for the young unmarried ladies in France at this time, and indeed long since, were not allowed by the established etiquette to stray from the wing of their mother, or whoever might supply her place; they never went abroad without this sanction, even with the parties of the greatest decorum and sobriety, or to houses of the best character. The custom of young ladies going alone for months on visits to distant friends, was totally uncountenanced, or rather unknown; and would have exposed their character to the most disgraceful reflections: they were never trusted to walk out by themselves, far less with young men for their escort; nor were even married ones, though of the most unblemished character, allowed to be the guardians of young females of fashion: so nice a point was it considered. On

the other hand, matrimony put an immediate end to all restraint; a young married woman did not indeed commonly go out unattended, but she was quite at liberty as to the choice of her Chevalier, provided she was not seen at suspicious places, or at unseasonable hours. She chose her own company, invited male guests, received them at her *Ruelle*, at her toilette, or in her *Boudoir*; while no husband who would not run the risk of general contempt and indignation, ever attempted to infringe privileges so established. Women of the best conduct and strictest virtue, followed these customs, and thereby sanctioned and preserved from censure, such as converted them to the purposes of intrigue. The husband and wife had always their several apartments, frequently separate circles and pleasures, and the fortune of

the latter, by the laws of the land, was as much at her disposal after marriage as before; nor could the husband squander or sequester it: while the politeness of the nation stiled every thing *Madame's*, house, carriage, servants, &c.

The Marquis du Plessis declined cards, and seating himself by Clara, whom he was happy to find he could see with a pleasure unmixed with emotion, engaged her in conversation:—

"How delighted am I, Mademoiselle," said he, "to find you of my wife's parties!—May I hope that you will cultivate the acquaintance?—A taste for society such as your's, and which a nearer connection cannot fail to inspire, will furnish the best antidote against that for large and tumultuous assemblies, where

cards are the only resource, because conversation is almost excluded."

"The Marchioness," answered Clara, "is so distinguished in large assemblies, that it is no wonder she enjoys them; I dislike them, I own; but it is perhaps, because I should never be any thing but a cypher there: if I had not my work-bag always with me upon such occasions, I really believe, that in spite of the noise and gaiety, I should drop asleep, by the card table."

"You evade my request, Mademoiselle," said the Marquis, "and I have been forming the pleasantest schemes, in the idea of seeing you and Adelaide bosom friends!"

"Truly," said Clara, "I am very much inclined to love her; and she has promised to love me. I find her frankness irresistible; her heart seems to me, as open as her countenance, as artless, and as gay."

At this period of the conversation, the young Marchioness was heard so loud at her table, that the attention of the whole assembly was called that way.

"It is intolerable!" cried she; "I lose every thing, and every body seems falling upon me; nobody minds money so little as I do, but I hate to lose it at cards, particularly at *Riversi:* —— and there sits Madame du Quesnoy, with the most provoking *sang-froid*, after she has seen my *Quinola* forced three times running,

hoarding up her aces, on purpose to throw them away upon me!—I will not play another card."

"I am sorry, Madame," said Madame du Quesnoy, with the composed air of a winning gamester, "but you know it is the game."

"I hate the game!" exclaimed the young Marchioness, throwing up her cards.

The Marquis du Plessis now went to his lady, and offered to take her seat.

"You are too lively Madame," said he, "for such a *piquant* game as *Riversi*; go and chat with Mademoiselle de Montfier; take my place, and I will take yours."

The Marchioness arose, and seated herself by Clara.

"Am I not very childish?" said she to her; "I wish I could work as you do; — however I cannot be idle while every body is employed."

She then darted away without waiting for an answer, and seated herself at a round table, which she speedily enlivened. Madame de Blanville shrugged her shoulders; her own party soon after broke up, and to Clara's great relief, she ordered her carriage.

## CHAPTER VI.

### POLITE COMPANY.

A few days after, Madame de Blanville gave a dinner. In the morning when Clara went as usual to pay her respects; her Aunt said;

"I am glad you are come, my dear, I want you to write a note for me."

Clara seated herself at the desk, and wrote according to the directions given

her, a card of invitation to the Chevalier de Liancourt, which her aunt immediately dispatched :

"It was very remiss of me," said she," *Peste!* I had like to have forgotten the Chevalier! and he appears to be very well with the young Marchioness; she would have thought me a strange tramontane; and perhaps have been out of humour; she, that I depend upon for half the entertainment; for when she is pleased no one is so amiable."

Clara with some surprize, enquired if the Marquis du Plessis, was not coming?

"He is invited," said her aunt, "I know not if he will come; but if it so happened, that he did and the Chevalier not, our little Marchioness would

never forgive me; — *Peste!* invite her husband and leave out her friend! — that would be too bad. — If I knew of any lady a favorite of the Marquis's, I would invite her for him. — One should be *just* upon these occasions; but he is sly; there is no finding him out; did you ever hear of any?"

"No indeed, Madam," replied Clara, coldly, and still more surprised; and after a moment's reflection, she added, "The Marquis du Plessis is a man of excellent principles; I believe he took his wife because she was his favorite, and that his favorite will always be his wife."

"You are a child;" said her Aunt, laughing, "and know nothing of such things; nor is it very necessary that you should just at present."

The Chevalier de Liancourt did not fail the invitation, and was placed officiously by the young Marchioness, whose elegance nothing could exceed but her vivacity; the young Baron D'Ormond, was placed on her other hand who vied in attentions, with the gay Chevalier, and was equally distinguished by the lady.

The Baron d'Ormond having done great honor to the Presidente's good cheer, descanted upon the merits of every dish, and described the ingredients and the best manner of preparing the sauces, like a professed cook: declared with that air of self-complacency, that people are apt to assume when boasting of some perfection, " that he was naturally a glutton,"

Monsieur du Blaisel took up the discourse to boast of a present he had made to some great personage about Court; "not without expecting a return, I request of you to believe," he continued; "I am none of those fools who give without a view to their own little interests; I know how to sow upon good land." Another of the company told of a device by which he got rid of a very vicious horse to a friend.

"And suppose he breaks your friend's neck?" said the Presidente;

"That is *his* business," replied the Narrator: "it was mine to take care of my own, and to make the best of a bad bargain."

The company laughed and applauded his wit and *finesse*, and the Baron D'Or-

mond, defied him, with all his adroitness to be more expert, at a pretence, or a bright invention, struck off in an instant than he was himself; nor was he the only one to contend for this species of merit. As the wine went round and the mirth increased, light jests and flimsy efforts at wit were bandied about, and as they aimed at every thing, of course sometimes hit. No subject was started, but was immediately hunted down as fair game; sentiment, morality, even religion, had each their share of ridicule, till Clara, who at first had felt only contempt, alternately sickened with disgust, or glowed with indignation.

The arrival of the coffee was some relief; Madame de Blanville soon after arose, and giving her hand to the Marquis du Plessis led to the card Rooms.

The parties were formed, and Clara whispering her Aunt that she should go for her work, escaped awhile from society so distasteful to her. Instead of looking for her embroidery, she seated herfelf at her window, in a pensive attitude, and was lost in reflections upon all she had heard and seen, when Therese entered the apartment.

" I believe, Mademoiselle," said the waiting-woman; " I can guess at your thoughts ;— yes, you are certainly wishing yourself at Montfier."

" You are right, Therese," returned Clara, " I was figuring to myself, the Robin twittering on the pear-tree by my window, and my papa, returning from his walk up the avenue; the children, and my little dog running to meet him."

"Yes Mademoiselle," continued Therese, "and Guilloit striding over the ploughed ground after him, and detaining him with some cock and bull story about the sheep, or the oxen, or the corn; or the Lord knows what, while you are waiting supper; and I singing over my work, Mademoiselle, stopping now and then in the midst of my song, to listen to the soft sound of a light breeze shaking down the rustling dead leaves; or watching the faint rays of the setting sun, as they gild the windows of the opposite turret; or the rising of the evening star, which by the way, is worth all the lamps in Paris, and rather preferable to the nasty dead walls that shut us up here."

"Thou hast drawn a mighty pretty picture," said Clara, sighing; and just then a servant came from Madame de

Blanville to request her neice would join the company. She obeyed, and found it considerably increased. Among the additional guests was the Abbè de Louverie, who as she entered, advanced to meet her, and paid his compliments with the grace of a Parisian, and the cordiality of a friend. He begged leave to introduce to her acquaintance the Chevalier de Thierry, his relation, and a man of merit; and not to judge of his mind by his countenance, as he was remarkably plain.

"If his face does not frighten you from attending to his conversation, Mademoiselle, I do not despair, but in time you may think my cousin handsome."

"At least Monsieur L'Abbé," said Clara, "in introducing me to your cousin's acquaintance, do not prejudice him

against me, by leading him to suppose that I set an undue vaiue upon outward attractions; believe me, sir," continued she, addressing the stranger "I hold beauty but as a trivial advantage."

"You delight me, Mademoiselle," answered the Chevalier de Thierry; "and surprize me not less; can you really slight an advantage you so eminently possess?—Mere beauty is indeed a frail and trivial distinction; a body without a soul; but the united charms of mind and person."......

"Are certainly very fascinating," interrupted Clara; "yet as they are so often disjoined, there can be no hesitation, I think, which to prefer."

"Here is the Viscountess D'Avremont, in whom both are certainly united," observed the Abbé.

Clara, who had met this Lady several times, saw her arrive with great pleasure, for her good sense, sweetness, and engaging deportment, had gained much upon her good opinion. Madame D'Avremont was young and handsome, and had an air of languor most peculiarly interesting: she did not love cards, and readily joined the circle we have been describing, which she contributed much to enliven. The junior Marquis du Plessis, being soon after released from the party of the Presidente, by the arrival of more company, likewise joined this select circle; some interesting topics were discussed, and Clara once more felt herself at home.

"How goes on the study of English, Mademoiselle," said the Abbé de Louverie," since, you say, you have lost your master ?"

"Not quite so well," replied Clara, "nevertheless it does go on."

The Count de Blaisel being within hearing at this part of the conversation now approached.

"If Mademoiselle is in want of a master for the English language," said he, "I think I could venture to proffer my services. I have been mistaken by very good judges for one of that nation, so exactly have I caught their difficult pronunciation.—Not that I have the vanity to suppose, that in a long conversation I should escape detection, that is hardly to be expected."

The Chevalier de Thierry observed, "that he had always understood, the pronunciation of English to be so extremely difficult to their southern neighbours, that it was hardly to be acquired, but among the natives, and then, only by children or very young persons."

"Monsieur is perfectly correct," said the Count, rapping his gold snuff-box, "it is certainly to most people unattainable; but Mademoiselle who has had the instructions of a native, I presume, speaks like one?"

"Far from it, sir," said Clara, "nor should I ever venture to expose my imperfect articulation before so great a judge as Monsieur."

The Count de Blaisel, here with some effort delivered himself of a sentence,

which if he had not given as English, might as well have passed for Dutch, and of which Clara in vain attempted to catch one word. The Abbé de Louverie was not more successful; and Monsieur de Blaisel, shrugging his shoulders, that people should pretend to any knowledge of things, concerning which they were so profoundly ignorant, left them to their stupidity, and walked away to one of the card tables.

"Then," said the Chevalier de Thierry, "it should seem, Mademoiselle does not understand the Count's English?"

"I know not, if it be his fault or mine," said Clara, "but the fact is certain."

"Mademoiselle," said Madame d'Avremont, "does not seem perfectly to

understand the Count's French, yet, I suspect, he would be very glad to make it intelligible to her."

"It is owing to my provincial ignorance, Madame," said Clara, "I have not as yet acquired the Parisian dialect; however that is no fault of Monsieur's for to do him justice, he has the goodness to reprove me, whenever I use any expression, which savors of my country breeding and is not naturalized in the polite circles here."

"The Count is a puritist," said Monsieur de Thierry.

"He must be so in an unpardonable degree," said the old Marquis du Plessis, who was not long arrived, and had but just found out Clara, "who can find any

thing to disapprove, in the words which fall from such lips as those."

The young Marquis du Plessis, rising, gave place to his father, and Clara, not at all delighted with the exchange, nor with the compliments and attentions of the latter, took refuge by the side of her Aunt.

Clara remarked that the Abbé de Louverie was much improved from his abode in the polite air of Paris, he had lost his pedantic self-sufficient air, and was become as agreeable, as he was certainly intelligent and well-bred.

He placed himself by her for the remainder of the evening, talking on subjects the most interesting to her, of Montfier and the late extraordinary occurrences.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE VISCOUNTESS D'AVREMONT.

The Marquis Du Plessis delighted, as we have said, to find that he could regard Clara as a rational companion and tender friend, hardly forming a wish but that Adelaide might one day resemble her, called the next day upon Madame de Blanville. It was near noon; but that Lady was not yet risen; Clara was at work in her aunt's dressing-room, and Madame D'Avremont, who had conceived a great friendship for her, was keeping her company. When

the Marquis had paid his devoirs as usual, at the *ruelle* of the Presidente, he was allowed to repair to the dressing-room till she arrived there. As soon as he had paid his compliments to the two Ladies, he began the conversation, by something like an apology for what had passed at table the preceding day.

"I am apprehensive, Mademoiselle," said he to Clara, "that it must have given you no very favorable impression of the society to be met with here;—yet do not judge too hastily, from such a specimen; the dissolute court of our present ruler has but too much influence upon all within its sphere."

"I should be sorry to do so;" replied Clara; "for in that case, I must believe, that folly and vice, are considered as accomplishments to be boasted of:—

I own I was much more surprized than delighted with great part of the conversation:—I had been told that immorality was too much the fashion, but did not expect to hear it so openly avowed."

"And yet," rejoined the Marquis, "several of the company of yesterday, were perhaps far more weak than wicked: they fancy, such is their deplorable wrong-headedness, that impiety is a sign of a strong mind; and depravity of knowledge of the world; and in consequence of such a mistaken view of things, often affect to be much worse than they really are."

"It is a most contemptible kind of hypocrisy," observed Clara.

"Yes, Mademoiselle," resumed the Marquis, "the opposite kind has been stiled,

the homage which vice pays to virtue, and this is, I think, that which folly pays to vice.—But how do you like the Chevalier De Thierry?"

"Very much," answered Clara: "with him and the Abbé De Louverie, I felt at home, with the rest of the company I had hardly an idea or an opinion in common."

"What do you think of the Baron D'Ormond?" enquired Madame D'Avremont.

"I hardly know," said Clara; "I saw but little of him, and that little was not much to his advantage; it is however, hardly fair, to form an opinion of a stranger, from an inadvertent speech that may happen to escape him."

" He is in general," said the Viscountess, suppressing a sigh;" a favorite with the women; but he is not so amiable as he appears."

" I cannot say," returned Clara, " that he appeared amiable to me: I am such a novice that I thought to please even such as were not very rigid moralists, it was necessary to assume an appearance of the social, if not of the austere virtues: but it should seem, it is not so here."

" The Baron D'Ormond can assume what appearance he pleases, I assure you;" said Madame D'Avremont; " When it was the fashion to be sentimental, he was the most sentimental of men; but now it is the *ton* only to be sensual."

" How long has sentiment been excluded the *ton?*" Clara enquired.

" A few months only, my dear friend;" returned the Viscountess, " you may perceive I have not yet left it off; but I hardly dare acknowledge it, except to bosom friends and provincials."

" Do not leave off sentiment, my dear friend," said Clara; " it is a kin to virtue, and only wants a proper motive to become one itself."

" Ladies may often find it dangerous," said the Marquis; " it is a disguise easy to assume; an artful man may wear it as a cloak to the very worst designs; and an innocent woman as a hoodwink to her own virtue.—What Lady of delicacy but would be shocked with the avowed pretensions of a seducer, while

a flimsy veil of sentiment, conceals from her the danger she incurs, till sometimes she falls a victim to it?"

"Oh," said Madame D'Avremont, eagerly interrupting him, "there are particular signs among sentimental people, that none but brothers can understand."

"And do you really think Madam," returned the Marquis, "that there are no false brethren to betray those signs, when they have nothing to intimidate them from such treachery?"

Madame D'Avremont deeply blushing, replied,—

"They cannot wear the mask long; I allow they may for a time, but it drops when they are off their guard,

which in short, they must be some-times."

"But in the interval, Madam," returned the Marquis, "how fatally the deception may have succeeded!—Moreover Ladies who have a mind to be deceived, will throw a veil over villainous features, with their own hands, and of their own weaving."

"You are very rigid, Monsieur," said she; "You shall not be my director; I will own to you that sentiment is the charm of my existence.—When I married I looked for it, in the man I preferred to all others. I was first disappointed, then disgusted, lastly convinced, that he was incapable of the finer feelings of the soul.—Could there

be any harm in seeking those sublime enjoyments with another?"

"I believe there might be a great deal of danger, Madam," replied the Marquis:

"There is no sex in souls, my dear sir," returned the Lady; "My heart is delicate, tender, and formed for the delights of friendship; whether the object be male or female, old or young, beautiful as an angel, or deformed as a satyr, I profess to you, is indifferent to me — provided it be worthy: and has ideas, opinions, sentiments, feelings, call them what you please, congenial with my own: — but such a friend is necessary to my existence; — I own it to you freely; I am sure we are kindred minds.—I have just experienced a cruel

disappointment; the wound in my heart is yet bleeding, but an Angel is come from Heaven, with balm to my relief; her earthly name is Clara. — Oh! we shall be the dearest friends in the world; I am certain of it: — I would offer you, Monsieur Le Marquis, to be a third in our union; but your austerity alarms me—I suppose you would hardly allow me to love you?"

"I should be afraid of making too ardent a return, Madam," said he; "you assuredly would run no risk; but there would be an infinite deal for me."

"I am not to be so put off," said Madame D'Avremont; "I will have you for a friend in spite of yourself; when you find me light or unworthy, throw me by;—but not till then."

The Marquis could not but answer so flattering a speech with a compliment of acquiescence; he felt, nevertheless, a little distrustful, and was inclined to suspect, that the Lady's professions of sentimental delicacy, might be like those of the men, against whom he had just been endeavouring to caution her.

He was however mistaken. The Viscountess D'Avremont had received from nature, every shining and every valuable qualification; a fashionable mother had given her a fashionable education; her principles had been left to chance; but her disposition was naturally so good, that although from habit, she witnessed the depravity of others without disgust, yet could not the most provoking neglect of a husband she had idolized, or

the worst example and advice of her companions and friends, warp for an instant the integrity of her mind, or excite her to degrade herself in her own eyes. She was variously accomplished, excelled in music, was fond of poetry, and subject to enthusiasm in all her pursuits.

At the tender age of fifteen, she had been married to the Viscount D'Avremont, a man of the court and of the ton. She was now five and twenty; without children to engage the affections her husband did not seek to cultivate; and having in vain sought in him that union of hearts, which to her tender and ardent mind, was the summit of all earthly felicity. Monsieur D'Avremont was not deficient in understanding nor unamiable in manners, but he

looked upon every sort of affection as folly, and that for a wife, as the greatest of all: he was lively and elegant, and sure to be well received by all women of style; nor while he indulged himself in every inclination, did he, in the least seek to constrain those of his Lady; she had a liberty which many women would have envied or abused, but it was not to her taste; she would have preferred the bonds of mutual affection. — After passing the first years of her marriage in vain endeavours to obtain the heart of her husband, or in fruitless grief at her ill success, she had suffered herself to be deluded by the appearance of friendship and sentimental delicacy affected by the Baron D'Ormond. She had at first avoided, then listened to, and at length made him the confidante of her unhappiness; in time grew tenderly attached to him,

conceiving him to be a paragon of disinterested friendship, platonic love, and inflexible integrity.—The Viscountess had but just discovered the cloven foot, when she became acquainted with Clara, and her grief and disappointment at finding an artful seducer, where she had expected a sympathising and faithful friend, required all the tenderness and soothing of such a comforter.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### POETRY.

A few days after the conversation related in the preceding Chapter, Clara went with her Aunt to pay a visit to the Vicountess d' Avremont. This lady was a little indisposed, and she requested so earnestly that Mademoiselle de Montfier might be left to keep her company for the day, that the Presidente who never

was without engagements for herself, readily consented.

"Oh how happy am I," said Madame d' Avremont to Clara, as soon as they were alone, "I will give orders to be denied to every creature — What a fortunate indisposition has this proved; I was dying for a little private conversation with my dearest friend, and shall at length have that satisfaction — Oh, it will be such a relief after the insipid conversation to which I am usually condemned, to communicate my feelings and ideas to a congenial mind! — *Allons*, my dear friend to my Boudoir, no one shall interrupt us — what an intellectual treat!"

Clara professed herself, as she really was much gratified with the distinction

shewn her; she attended with tenderness and interest to the complaints of the Vicountess, not yet presuming to offer to a married woman, several years her senior, any thing but sympathy.

" When I have no friend to whom to complain," said Madame d' Avremont, "I invoke the Muse, and endeavour to divert my sorrows, by putting them into verse."

Saying this, she opened her desk, and offered Clara some stanzas to read;

" It is long since I wrote these verses, my dear friend," continued she, " I left them purposely in my husbands way, but they were far from producing the effect I had fondly hoped."

Clara read the manuscript as follows:

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## *THE RESOLVE.*

"Yes," Celia said, "'tis mighty well,
"Go to your late discover'd Belle,
"No more I'll care about you;
"For me I'll take my lute and stray,
"I'll tune my song to measures gay,
"My heart to peace without you."

"Oh! 'twas a heart to feeling prone,
"Kind, tender, faithful, — all your own,
"Altho' you did not prize it —
"Well, I will steel it o'er and o'er;
"Love, never shall have entrance more —
"You slight, but sh'ant despise it."

She said, and check'd her as she sigh'd,
To feel as she express'd she tried,
And wander'd o'er the plain;
She sought some tranquil glen to find.
She sought abstraction from her mind,
— She sought alas, in vain.

" Poor wand'rers, who for ever rove,
" Mistaking appetite for love,
" Why seek ye to engage
" The tender and believing fair ?—
" Why give the chains ye will not wear ?
" The pangs ye ne'er assuage ?"

" Ah why, deceitful and unjust,
" Betray the Virgin's easy trust,
" And for endearments chaste,
" Exchange the leavings of the sty,
" A heart and body equally
" Corrupted and debas'd ?"—

" Ye cannot prize affection true,
" That never but one object knew,
" Ye cannot feel like me !—
" The tender, constant, wedded dame,
" Makes of her love a sacred flame,
" From grosser passion free.

" One only change that flame can know,
" Its fervent, steady, quiet glow,
" If aliment not giv'n ;
" Will ne'er for sensual idols burn,
" But to its central point return,
" And seek its native heav'n."

Thus Celia with a heart oppressed,
Pour'd forth the sorrows of her breast,
And rov'd with restless pace;—
Ah! fair one, it is not on earth,
Hearts framed like thine, of sterling worth,
Can find their resting place.

" Ah no!" she cried with flashing eye,
And hemm'd away the rising sigh,
" His loss I'll not deplore;
" I never will behold again,
" The basest, falsest, worst of men;
" He ne'er shall see me more!"

T'was thus her firm resolves she made,
When lo, she heard a hasty tread,
And well known accents call;
" My Celia, love, why so unwise?
"Lo! the sun sinks — the damps arise,
" Why walk at ev'nings fall?"

" Why thus unguarded dost thou rove?—
" Come, let me lead thee home, my love,
" Recline upon my arm;
" Thou'rt pale and weary lovely dame,
" Why thus expose thy tender frame,
" To danger and alarm?"

Thus Strephon spoke with soothings bland,
And took his Celia's willing hand,
With well-dissembled care, —
Her firm resolve, — her anger keen,
Resentment — jealousy — and spleen,
All vanish'd in the air!

---

"I do not ask you to admire my poetry, my dear friend," said Madame d' Avremont, "but to pity my case, of which it is too faithful a picture. I write verses to relieve my mind, not to shew it off."

"I like them very much," returned Clara, "but that is slender praise from so incompetent a judge. — I am sorry they are not wholly fictitious — You would frighten me from marrying."—

"I sould be concerned to do so," said the Viscountess, "if I am peculiarly unhappy, it is perhaps the sensibility of my heart, which is the chief cause. We must marry, my dear friend, for whatever our sufferings in the state, they are preferable to the constraint, the apathy and insignificance of celibacy.— Monseur d' Avremont has no heart, but he has a great deal of good nature. I do as I please with every thing but him—he never contradicts or constrains me.—

Clara glancing over the papers, as they lay scattered upon the table, smiling said, "Here are more verses; may I not look at them?"—"I dont know," replied the Viscountess, her color a little heightened, "if you were married

I should make no difficulty — but there are so many things one cannot say to single ladies — Oh! pray my dear do not resolve against matrimony, I can make you but half a confidante now, and Alas! I am in such want of one! — I thought I had found one! — but Oh! the traitor — Whatever your affliction, my dear Clara, never trust a man."—

The Viscountess, while she was talking turned over the papers which had excited Clara's curiosity, as if she was half inclined to indulge it, "May I?" said Clara, taking them and smiling in her face. As Madame d' Avremont made no opposition, she read as follows: —

## TO DAMON.

---

It was not you, mistaken swain,
My partial heart approv'd —
It was not you — believe my strain,
That I so fondly lov'd.

The vision of my brain, 'tis true,
In outward line and frame,
Had some similitude to you;
And hence the error came:

And from a mind unvers'd in art,
Sanguine, and warm, and prone
Ever to think the proffer'd heart,
In fashion as its own.

Too oft the fairest form and face,
The glowing tint of skin,
Are but a monumental case,
Concealing dross within.

The tender friend, I thought to find,
To human fault or woe,
Was tender as the summer wind,
We hardly feel to blow:

Yet to himself in all severe
Dauntless and firm and true;
Fearing his God, no other fear,
His gen'rous bosom knew.

Candor sat regal on his brow,
And truth's integrity,
Bade from his heart his accents flow —
Ah! how unlike to thee!

Honor in him, by virtue taught,
Was virtues glorious pride,
Unsullied as Heaven's azure vault,
When, not a cloud's descried.

And such the love that gently fir'd —
As elevate — as chaste —
A fervent flame that still aspir'd,
That warm'd, but ne'er debas'd —

Methought, in the same furnace tried,
Our hearts like sterling ore
Unchang'd remain'd, while purified,
And lov'd for evermore.

Oh! it was then my faith I vow'd,
To the fair form pourtray'd,
And thus before the idol bow'd,
That I myself had made.

Keen disappointment's sharpest sting,
Fond flatt'ring hope must prove;
It mounts e'en, on enjoyments wing,
And speeds the car of love.

For oh! unlike the friend I meant,
Tho' fashion'd as of gold;
To each sublimer sentiment,
You senseless were and cold:

Love's gentlest, tenderest controul.
No spark from Heav'n could gain,
To breathe an intellectual soul,
To burst of sense the chain.

Sink grovler to thy kindred earth,
Disolv'd our mutual ties ;
While conscious of superior worth,
Shall my freed spirit rise.

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"You must not question me as to the occasion of these lines, just at present," .d the Viscountess, "another time, I .ay be more communicative."

## CHAPTER IX.

### A FASHIONABLE HUSBAND.

The Viscountess D'Avremont ordered dinner to be served in her own apartment; and the two Ladies spent the day in reading and conversation, much to their mutual delight. Towards evening a servant brought a message from the Viscount, to know if he might be permitted to trespass a moment upon his Lady's retirement.

"What can have put it into his head to come here now?" said she in a low voice to Clara; "I have hardly seen him for this month past — however, I suppose he will not stay.—Tell Monsieur he may come:" she said to the servant.

A very genteel man immediately followed the message, whom the Viscountess presented to Clara as her husband.

"This, then is the Lady," said he, paying his devoirs; "of whom I have heard so much, and yet not half enough. Is it possible there should exist a monster in nature capable of wounding so much beauty, and is he not brought to justice?"

Clara answered slightly, "that rumor had as usual, made both her and her wound of much more consequence than

they deserved; and magnified in the same manner the guilt of the aggressor, who was so far from meaning her any harm, that he had been the means of saving all the family."

After a few more questions to Clara, well mixed with compliments, the Viscount turned to his Lady, saying, that having understood she was indisposed, he had done himself the honour to wait upon her, with enquiries after her health."

Madame D'Avremont answered coldly, "that her disorder was nothing more than a nervous head-ach, which a few hours and a little quiet would probably remove."

"A head-ach! Madame," he exclaimed; "and you are poring over papers?—Oh!

believe me, you are much to blame.—And Mademoiselle too! — Oh! for the love of heaven, or rather of me, throw all this behind the fire—reading, writing, and reflection are greater foes to beauty than the jaundice or the small-pox; they will infallibly make your eyes red and dim—Look in the glass, *ma belle demoiselle*, and be convinced of the murder you are committing.—Leave reading and moralizing and sentimentalizing to the old and the ugly, who have no other use for their eyes.—Let me have these papers," said he, catching up some of them, as if to throw them into the fire. Clara not quite certain whether he was in jest or earnest, hastily snatched them from him.

"Here is something," said she, "that I am sure you would not destroy;" and she offered him the *Resolve*.

"I would destroy nothing that you would wish to save, certainly Mademoiselle," said he, "But I hope you will not insist on my reading it?—I am none of those physicians, who prescribe for others rules they will not follow themselves.—No, as long as I can behold, living, lively, animated beauty, I never will look on dead letter—and I give you my word of honor, that I had rather hear a pretty woman talk nonsense, than read the finest sense that ever was penned."

"It is not to Mademoiselle de Montfier, Sir," said his Lady, "that you should boast of such a way of thinking."

"Mademoiselle is, I dare say," said he, "as reasonable as she is beautiful; that is to say, as reasonable as a beautiful woman ought ever to be; taking

men and things as they are — not expecting impossibilities — never reasoning or reflecting upon any subject more abstruse than an opera tune, or the most becoming colour of a ribbon; or on schemes of enslaving mankind, with twenty thousand charming, enchanting little caprices, worth all the reason in the world.—Do you know, Ladies, that I am just fallen desperately in love with the Marchioness du Plessis?—Oh! the divine enchantress!—Do you think if she was to spend her time in reading and reflecting, she would have all Paris in her train, and eyes that eclipse all the jewels in it? — But I am going to sup with her, it is that which inspires me with such hilarity.—Adieu, fair Ladies, I have the honor to kiss your hands — unless indeed you have any scheme for the evening; and in default of a better Che-

valier, will allow me the happiness of setting you down?"

The Viscountess in reply said, "they were not going out, and that Madame du Quesnoy was to call for Mademoiselle on her return from the Opera." Monsieur D'Avremont then arose, and bowing very gracefully to the Ladies, left them to their tête-a-tête.

Madame D'Avremont following him with her eyes, said to Clara, "you perceive, my dear friend, that this is not the husband for me. I now recollect what must have procured me the honor of his visit; for here he has not set his foot these three months.—He doubtless saw you from his window as you alighted in the court-yard, and that he should seek a nearer view, does not at all sur-

prize me. But tell me frankly, what do you think of him?"

"That he is very handsome and elegant," returned Clara, "and has the most agreeable sort of levity, I beg your pardon, vivacity I should say, of any man I ever saw. — I presume too, that he affects a passion for ignorance, as the Gentlemen we were in company with the other day affected other passions, from which they were perhaps equally free."

"Monsieur D'Avremont," said the Viscountess, "is neither deficient in abilities nor information: I once thought his rattle very agreeable; but I was at an age when it is still pardonable to be pleased with rattles. Even you seem to find him entertaining; he is usually so in company; but if he were alone with me, it is a great chance if he conde-

scended to speak to me. — However, as he so admires Madame du Plessis, it is no wonder that he slights me, we certainly are not at all alike — Why am I so weak as to be disturbed about him?"

Madame D'Avremont in pronouncing these last words, sighed profoundly; and Clara being wholly at a loss for an argument to dissipate the uneasiness her friend could not help betraying; a silence of some minutes ensued, which the Viscountess was the first to break; and by asking innumerable questions relative to the young Marchioness, proved what had been the subject of her cogitations, and that what her husband had so lightly said, had made on her the deepest impression: in vain did Clara seek to divert her attention to other subjects, the Viscountess like all persons, whom the demon of jealousy or any

other demon equally restless has possessed, ingenious in tormenting herself, was sure to strike out in roads the most opposite, some bye-path leading back to that whence her imagination had started.

Clara's next attempt was to read to her; she had proceeded through several pages of an interesting work; but when she stopped at a brilliant passage for her friend's opinion, she had the mortification to find, that it had not even been heard by her. The book was of course laid aside, and Madame D'Avremont having apologized for her absence and inattention, immediately began talking of the Marchioness Du Plessis.

" I have not been long acquainted with her husband," said she, " he is a little grave, but certainly very amiable.

You heard how he checked me when I offered him my friendship.—I wish the Viscount had a little of his way of thinking; it would be better for us all."

Clara finding it so impossible to divert the Viscountess from the subject of her disquiet, conceived she might, perhaps, derive more relief from conversing freely upon it, and soon found that she had hit upon the better plan; the melancholy of her friend, by degrees, began to dissipate; and when Madame du Quesnoy's carriage was announced, she appeared to have no other chagrin than that of so soon parting with her amiable companion.

Clara had nevertheless caught a little of the contagion of her melancholy, nor could she forbear reflecting, with the most sensible concern on the ill fate in

marriage of the two persons among her acquaintance, whom she thought the most worthy of esteem and of happiness in it. The Marquis du Plessis and Madame D'Avremont.

"Alas!" thought she, "that both my friends should be so mispaired! — How happy might they have been together, and how should I have enjoyed their felicity! — Oh yes," with a deep sigh, "I certainly must have enjoyed it very much."

## CHAPTER X.

### LETTERS AND SCHEMES.

Winter was now setting in apace, and Clara received from her father the last letter she could hope for till the return of Spring.

"So then," said Therese to her lady, as she was perusing them, "We can hear no more from poor Montfier for these three months to come. Oh! I

shall be dead with *ennui*, long ere then."—

Clara was silent, these melancholy months seemed to her in anticipation immeasurably long, and Therese continued.

" Ah Mademoiselle! it will be of no use now, to watch for the post hour. When it failed us one day, well Therese you used to say; we shall have the pleasure of hope again for to-morrow, which if there had been a letter to day, we could not—But now Mademoiselle how shall we console ourselves?—three long months!—Oh Heavens! Mademoiselle do you think they will ever be at an end?"

" Ah, Therese!" answered her mistress, " and you will then be of opinion, that they have fled away very fast.—

But here, we have just received the most satisfactory account of all our friends; my dear father is well and happy and writes in the kindest manner possible; and instead of enjoying the present certain good, we are tormenting ourselves, because it is to last us without any addition for some time. Indeed it is very unwise, yet I fear too much the practice of all weak mortals. We neglect the present good in our possession, and torment ourselves with fruitless regret for the past, or apprehensions for the future — and that is the way never to be happy, Therese."

"It is not much my way, Mademoiselle, I know not how I chanced to stumble upon it now — I never should have done so at Montfier, that's certain: The air we used to breath there, was far too sweet and too salutary, to breed

any maggots in the brain; but such as would presently turn to butterflies; like your silk worms, Mademoiselle, but fly away a pretty deal faster, I know."

"My Papa has heard from Mr. Forrest, Therese," said Clara, "and he talks of coming to us again, early in the Spring."

"Well, so much the better, Mademoiselle, he is very well to look at;—for my part, I had rather have some listeners in company than all talkers; they perform their part, every one has his particular knack at entertaining — I think a man who looks at me with an air of attention, is not at all to be despised as a companion — Moreover he talked of bringing an English valet along with him; now I really have a curiosity to see one.—La Roche may say what he will of their not

knowing how to dress hair, or to dance; or to toss up a fricassee, if people were ever so hungry and in want of one, they may be very clever and agreeable notwithstanding."

"That's a point I leave you to settle Therese," said her mistress, "in the mean time I think my Aunt must be stirring, I am going to her, to tell her what my Papa says."

Madame de Blanville listened to a detail of the little events of Montfier which were to Clara so interesting, with evident impatience and distaste, at length stopping her short, she said, she had things of much more consequence to treat of.

"*Peste!* Mademoiselle, I have such a match proposed for you, as my most

sanguine ideas never led me to expect—Your little untutored eyes and rural simplicity have done great execution, I profess; you have a fine subject for your reflections now, but let them be mature I entreat you, if indeed you can hesitate at all."

As Clara remained silent, surprized and even alarmed, her Aunt continued her discourse, and after descanting upon the advantages of rank and fortune, reminding her neice, how little of the last she had a right to expect; after some arguments, and a great many words, she came to the point, and named the senior Marquis du Plessis.

Although our fair heroine was prepared with a refusal, whomsoever the person proposed might be; yet was she so

shocked and surprised at the name, she could not return an immediate answer.

"You are in the right, my dear child," said her Aunt, "Yes, you are quite right to be in no hurry to answer — Reflect seriously on the happiness and advantages offered you; and do not answer till you find yourself disposed to do so as you ought."

"It is to my father, Madame," at length said Clara —

"Your father, my dear," interrupted her Aunt, "has not half so much sense as you, and has very properly left you to your own discretion."

"Then Madam" ——

"Pooh, pooh," again interrupted the Presidente, "let me hear nothing of foolish difficulties and objections — as to the Marquis's being as old, or perhaps, a little older than your father, what does that signify? — It is always necessary that there should be experience and discretion, at least, on one side. — I married a man thirty years older than myself, well, what then? — I do assure you I was as happy with him, as — as — as people usually are. — There are some advantages in having an old husband if he has reason to be jealous, he has no right — in short, my dear child, the matter is settled, the Marquis is coming to dinner, see that you receive him well and are as amiable as possible, that is all there is required of you for the present.

Madame de Blanville here left her neice to her reflections, which for some time were none of the pleasantest: For however convinced, that her father would never consent to so preposterous a match, yet precluded from the possibility of consulting with him for several months, and meanwhile exposed to addresses so disgustful to her while sanctioned by her Aunt, she felt an anxiety, which was perfectly new to her inexperienced heart, and remained rivetted to her chair, lost in a labyrinth of tormenting apprehensions.

She was still in this situation, when the young Marquis du Plessis was announced, he was much surprised at the air of absence and embarrassment, with which Clara received him, and while the servant was gone to apprise

the Presidente of his visit, had time to enquire the cause.

"Is not Mademoiselle in good health?" said he, "I can assure her, that her dearest friends were very lately so; for I have just received from Montfier, the most satisfactory account of all of them."

"Alas! and so have I," returned Clara, "but shall I own it to you? I have the weakness to be almost as much distrest as pleased, because, I cannot expect to hear again for so long a time. The letters impress me like a solemn leave taking. — I seem the more anxious to write and to hear precisely, because all communication is impracticable, — indeed, I have very particular reasons.

"Your dejection is well explained, Mademoiselle," returned the Marquis, "how

happy should I be to remove it!—and perhaps I may — I have just received a sudden order to join my regiment, it is still in the neighbourhood of Montfier, and nothing is more likely than that I shall be knight errant enough to endeavor at traversing the snows, in order to catch a transient view of my little girl and our mutual friends."

"Do you think," Clara eagerly inquired, "it would be possible?"

"Every thing is possible, Mademoiselle, to inclination and resolution, when united; I will engage to bring or send you news from Montfier,—Oh! you are not acquainted with half my quixotism."

"I am acquainted with the whole of your good nature," said Clara, "but should be very sorry so to abuse it—

true, I have urgent reasons for wishing to confer with my father, on an affair"— she hesitated, half inclined to consult the Marquis without naming the party proposed to her; yet apprehensive from the details she must give he would too surely guess.

The Marquis, seeming to suspect the subject of her embarrassment remained some minutes silent also; finding however that no eclaircissement ensued, he ventured at length to say.

" If you will not consult, you must absolutely employ me— prepare your dispatches; in three days I set out; be under no anxiety, I have certain means of getting a letter safe conveyed."

Madame de Blanville here entered the room, and saluting the Marquis, with a

very cold air, enquired to what happy chance she was indebted for the honor of his visit? for the consciousness of meditating a scheme so inimical to his interests, rendered him at this particular crisis, no very welcome guest.

"I am come to enquire after your health and your commands, Madame," said he, "I am under orders to join my regiment and must be off in three days."

"That is very unfortunate indeed," replied the Presidente, "I am in despair at the thoughts of losing you so soon; but, in short, business must be done, and those who have regiments must attend to them — nothing is more clear."

The good lady was not however to learn, that the young Marquis was ordered away; since it was in consequence of

a plot contrived between his father and herself, that the mandate had been procured; that so, he might be removed from the possibility of throwing any impediments in the way of the projected union, for however unavailing they would certainly have proved; yet was the father too conscious of the folly he was seeking to commit, not to endeavour at removing the son from being a witness of it.—

" I had another view likewise, Madame La Presidente," resumed the Marquis, " and a still more interested one, for my visit this morning; I meant, as I leave Paris so soon, to have solicited the honor of being of your family dinner to day."

" I am in despair," said the lady, " that I must decline the happiness — how very unlucky that I should have prior engagements ; not only for to day, but

for to-morrow and the next; but the day after — Thursday is it not? — if you will do me the honor then?" —

Now Thursday was precisely the day, the Marquis had just informed her, was that fixed upon for his departure; taking no notice however, of the oversight, and not at all suspecting that it was wilful, he made his bow, lamenting that he should be so unfortunate as to find the ladies engaged at this particular juncture; and requesting permission to call once more for their commands.

## CHAPTER XI.

### AN OLD LOVER AND A YOUNG WIFE.

The senior Marquis du Plessis did not fail his engagement, and Clara spent a most uncomfortable day; his attentions, since she was apprized they had a serious meaning, were more than ever disgustful to her. To his numerous compliments and fine speeches, she could hardly return a civil answer; his youthful airs and dress only made him appear the older; and whatever in his manner,

she had once thought agreeable, now shocked her, as out of character and unbecoming.

In the evening she was relieved by the arrival of more company; yet still her tormentor was for ever near her, hanging over her chair, or seated by her side; nor could she converse freely with any one else. However, his daughter in law, at length arriving, escorted by the Viscount D'Avremont, he presently after took his leave.

"You did not expect *me*, I am sure," said the Marchioness, running to the Lady of the house, "but I am going to be again a widow, and as I do not intend to die with grief, I am flying about all over Paris in search of friends to condole with me. You, my dear Presidente, I am persuaded will not neg-

lect me in my affliction.—I invite every body to breakfast, dinner, and supper—to *levées,*— *couchées* — and you, my dear Mademoiselle de Montfier," running to Clara, " I am sure you will take compassion on me — Oh! come often I intreat you."

Without waiting for an answer she then flew to somebody else.

The Viscount D'Avremont followed the lively beauty from card table to card table, with an arch air of obsequiousness, and carrying her lap-dog. She declined all solicitation to take a place at any of them.

" Oh! I have far too much business upon my hands," said she, " to think of sitting down to cards. Now that I have bespoke my mourners, I must run about

for my weeds; but that is a matter of greater importance still.—Come Viscount, come along, if you acquit yourself well of your charge, you shall be my lap-dog bearer for three days — but mind what you are about; if ever he cries, or you let him down, you lose your place to a certainty, there are plenty in readiness for it, I can assure you. — Mademoiselle de Montfier," snatching the dog, and running with it to Clara, " only see what a lovely creature it is! — Oh my pretty, dear, sweet Zephyr! — come, you must kiss it."

Clara, who loved animals, caressed the dog, and praised its beauty, while Monsieur D'Avremont released an instant from his duty, availed himself of the opportunity to pay his compliments to some ladies at the other end of the room.

"What is become of the other animal?" exclaimed the Marchioness, hastily turning round, "Oh, he's gone, let him go—he has lost his place already."

Several gentlemen now advanced eagerly to claim the preference.

"Who loves dogs best of you all?" said she, throwing her sparkling eyes around, "I want a Chevalier for my dog, I give you notice, not for myself. Who among you can swear he never hurt a dog in his life?"

The discarded Chevalier was by this time returned, and at her feet.

"Oh you! more cruel even than fair!" exclaimed he in mock heroics, "take *me* for your dog if you will not admit me for your servant — or suffer Zephyr

himself to decide, and I am sure of the preference."

"That is very fair," said the Lady, setting down the dog, "now if he comes to you, you are reinstated."

Zephyr did not fail to distinguish his friend and justify his good opinion: the Lady, the Chevalier, and the dog then vanished together, while the serious business of the card tables, which this flying visit had a little interrupted, went on as before.

"*Allons*, Monsieur D'Ormond," said the Presidente, who was playing with him, "Now the Marchioness is gone, 'tis to be hoped you will know what you are about."

Early the ensuing morning Clara arose,

to prepare her dispatches for Montfier. In her letters she poured forth to her father her whole heart; its feelings and embarrassments; she related every thing that had passed since her last communications; requesting, what she was sure to obtain, advice and consolation. The young Marquis Du Plessis did not fail to call for his commissions.

" If you mean to be the bearer of this yourself," said Clara, " I will not give it to you."

" Oh! do not, Mademoiselle," said he, " proscribe a father from seeing his child — sure you may form some judgment of parental affection; by the filial you experience yourself.—If I am called out upon actual duty, I must encounter dangers and hardships far greater; merely for a vain breath of honor.—Oh, Mademoiselle, if yon knew how happy it will make

me when embracing my own daughter, to think I am approaching your father to his! — Oh! give me the packet."

Clara, thus earnestly solicited, delivered her letter with a smile and a glist'ning eye.

" Any thing else for Montfier?" said the Marquis.

" Oh yes," replied the Presidente, " you may embrace your little girl for both of us, if you please."

He then saluted the Ladies, and bade them adieu.

The young Marquis Du Plessis had left Paris but a few hours, when his Lady arrived at the hotel of Madame de Blanville, attended for this time, by the Baron D'Ormond. She hardly suf-

fered herself to be announced before she was in the sleeping room of the Presidente, which that Lady had not yet quitted.

"My dear Presidente," said the Marchioness, embracing her," you must positively trust me with Mademoiselle your niece this morning—next Tuesday I give a ball—I have nobody to controul me *now*, you know — Oh! I hope you will believe, that there will be nothing wanting—You will honor me by conducting Mademoiselle de Montfier, I am sure—But I am going all over Paris for dresses, and Mademoiselle must absolutely be of my council—Oh! I have so much to do and to think of — I cannot stay one hundredth part of a moment."

"If you will only have the complaisance to stay while I rise Madame,"

said the Presidente with her usual *non-chalance*, "I will have the honor to accompany you—I must have a dress myself; and mean also to present my niece with one—I shall be too happy to have your judgment upon them."

The young Marchioness, whom this delay very much provoked, and who besides, had no great inclination for the proposed addition to her party, skipped about the room like a squirrel to divert her impatience, while the Presidente was dressing, and was almost as mischievous; for she was continually snatching the articles of attire from her waiting women, whose mechanical movements did not keep pace with her vivacity, with as little respect for the crimped gauze, slender wire, fine lace, &c. as any squirrel or monkey whatever, and thus frustrated her own purpose, as impatient people usually do; retarding the

progress she meant to accelerate. The Presidente was remarkably slow in her motions; and very difficult in the choice and disposition of her attire. — In vain did the young Marchioness repeatedly assure her, that she looked charmingly, and that her dress was the most tasteful and becoming in the world; her own youthful and beautiful countenance, reflected from the too faithful mirror, by the side of that of the Presidente, and full in her view, contradicted in the most positive and provoking manner all her assertions. In fine, after detaining the impatient Marchioness full two hours, during which she never sat still two minutes, and altering her own head dress, at least ten times; not being able to succeed in appearing young and beautiful, she gave up the point, and the scheme of going where she could only appear as a foil. The Marchioness upon

this change of measures, hastily arose from the chair, where she had that moment placed herself, exclaiming, "that she was in despair at the disappointment."

"*Mais allons*, Mademoiselle," continued she to Clara, "*Depéchons*—we have not a moment to lose."

The company were presently seated in the carriage, and the horses which never were allowed a moderate pace, flew off at full speed.

After driving half round Paris, and tumbling over the frippery of at least a dozen different milliners; the young Marchioness was struck with the tasteful elegance of a head dress and trimmings which were adjusting in a band box, in order to be sent away.

" For whom are those beautiful things?" said she, eagerly pulling them out, " I must have them."

The milliner informed her, they were for the Countess des Vallons, the celebrated beauty so lately arrived from America.

" Oh! I know her," said the Marchioness, " and shall leave her a card for my ball; but she nor any one else is to eclipse me there — Observe, I shall have something in this style but not to look like imitation. It must cut this up all to nothing—My flowers must be of pearls, and my pearls of diamonds.—If I am second to this little Countess, or any one else, remark, I never buy of you again, so much as a yard of ribbon."

The milliner promised to excel herself; and a dress being fixed upon for Clara, whose choice was soon made, the Marchioness ordered her carriage to the Hôtel of Madame des Vallons, where she left a card of invitation for the ball, and then proceeded to set down Clara. She was all the way in even more than her usual spirits — enjoying by anticipation her triumph over a rival beauty; and boasting so much of the liberty she enjoyed of following her own desires, in the absence of her husband, that a stranger to existing circumstances, must have concluded him to be an unreasonable tyrant, instead of the tenderest, kindest, and most indulgent of men. Clara although pleased with her vivacity and flattered by the distinction shewn her, could not but be shocked and disgusted at such an excess of injustice.

# CHAPTER XII.

### A BALL.

If Clara had not been provided with ample resources in her own mind; her abode with her Aunt would have been far from delightful. The society of an antiquated Coquette, whose youth had been spent, in admiring herself, and laying out for the admiration of others, and whose studies had been confined to the toilet, and the card table; afforded matter rather for reflection than amuse-

ment; and would have impressed our heroine with horror at the melancholy fate of a woman, who losing her personal attractions possesses no other, even if she had been less fenced against vanity by a religious education. — The Presidente however entertained too well, to be in want of danglers; and cards were a never failing resource.

In compliance with her father's express wish, as well as her own rational desire of improvement, Clara, devoted her mornings, while the fashionable world was yet at rest, to receiving lessons in music and drawing, and once a week in dancing: In this last accomplishment, which had been to her till now, but a secondary concern, she was not sorry to have attained some excellence, preparatory to her first public appearance at the ball of Madame du Plessis; to

which she looked forward with little anxiety indeed, yet with the pleasure so natural to her age.

The important day at length arrived, and the Presidente de Blanville with her neice, escorted by the Senior Marquis du Plessis, were set down at the Hotel of the latter.

The apartment was already thronged with company, although the fair hostess had not yet appeared among them; a little surprized at her absence, and presuming upon the footing of intimacy on which she had been received by that lady, Clara immediately repaired to her dressing-room, to enquire the cause; but how was her amazement increased on entering there!

Adelaide, whom she had never before seen, but as a fit model for the picture of Euphrosine, might now have been mistaken for one of the furies; her complexion inflamed, her hair dishevelled, her eyes red and swoln; in short, wholly tiansformed; and in such a paroxysm of rage, as we should vainly attempt to describe. Clara stood rivetted to the spot, by the door she had just entered terrified beyond the power of utterance, and conceiving nothing less, than that the unfortunate beauty, had been suddenly seized with phrenzy.

As the black and white attendants were running against each other in the utmost confusion, while their lady was cuffing some, and throwing her dressing things at others, Clara remained for some minutes unnoticed; Adelaide however, at length perceived her, and flying

into her arms, reclined her head upon her bosom and burst into a passion of tears: deeply affected to see her in such a state, and trembling with apprehension of some fearful calamity, Clara at length ventured to enquire what had happened to cloud a day of such expected festivity?

"Shall I go and request of my Aunt," said she tenderly, "to send away the company? already they are assembled, and wondering at not seeing you among them."

"Oh! my dearest creature!" at length sobbed out the Marchioness, "the cruelest case! —— That vile *Modeuse*! —— She must have done it on purpose—— She has sent me the most abominable *Coeffure!* ——So heavy, so tasteless——I wonder she did not send the church of Notre Dame to put upon my head—

It was impossible to wear it — I cannot make my appearance — And that odious Countess! — I saw her from my window — They have attired her like a nymph — Oh! pity me, my dear friend; I shall go distracted."

Clara, whose terrified and confused imagination, had figured to her either the death of the young Marquis or of his infant daughter, as the only probable cause for such deep despair; felt somewhat relieved at this explanation.

"Where is this head dress my dear friend?" said she, "let me see it, it must be a strange invention indeed, if it can possibly make you look ill."

A little soothed by this well-timed compliment, the Marchioness answered more serenely, that she had destroyed it: In

effect, Clara following the glance of her eye, perceived point lace, pearls and diamonds scattered in profusion upon the ground.

" Well, my dear Marchioness," said she, " since you have destroyed your magnificent ornaments; you have nothing to do but to attire yourself with the utmost simplicity. Let your women tie up your beautiful hair with a silk kerchief, *a la Creole*, and dispose of these pearls fancifully among the plaits; and I will engage that no one shall eclipse you."

" My women are all brutes and fools," said the Marchioness weeping plentifully, " and look at my eyes, how red they are! — Oh! that vile *Modeuse!* — No, my dear creature, it is impossible that I should shew my face — If you, that have

so much taste? ....... Oh! how beautiful you look! —"

Clara, with her usual good nature, offered to assist at the toilet of the Marchioness; while she was thus engaged, and the latter in the heat of her invective, against the unfortunate *Modeuse*, Mademoiselle Gousset, the identical personage, was announced; and entered the room, attended by two of her young people carrying a host of band-boxes.

"Go, from my sight *Malheureuse!*" exclaimed the yet enraged beauty, "I never shall bear to look upon you again nor upon any thing that comes from your hands."

As soon as the milliner could prevail to be heard, after several ineffectual attempts, she with much submission made

her apology, alleging in defence of her taste, what was indeed strictly true, that she had not been allowed to follow it; for that it was her exact and too scrupulous compliance with the directions of the Marchioness that had occasioned the *Coeffure* to be heavy and overloaded with ornament. Adelaide heard but half this apology, to have the blame laid upon herself, was far too just to be borne, and only irritated her the more. Her fury returned and choaked her utterance; which had, however the good effect, of precluding her from exposing herself so much, as a smaller degree of it would certainly have done: while the good sense, and attention of Clara, found means to divert the storm, before it came to a direct explosion.

"Madame la Marquise," she said to the milliner, "could mean no more than to

give you general directions, which it was your business, to follow judiciously and not too literally — elegance, you could not but know, was the spirit of her order, whatever was the letter."

The Milliner was on the point of attempting to justify herself, by pleading the very positive commands she had received, when luckily for her, Adelaide, who like all unreasonable people, would only have been the more incensed, at being proved in the wrong; soothed at the able Advocate she had found in Clara, became suddenly good-humoured, and consented to look at the offered finery.

While this momentous business was transacting; and Clara essaying the effect of some bouquets of pearl and other

costly ornaments on the hair of the Marchioness; several Gentlemen, and among them, the Baron D'Ormond and the Viscount D'Avremont, deputed by the company, were soliciting an audience in the anti-room.

"Venus, attiring by the graces;—by all the graces in one!" exclaimed the Viscount, making his obedience, "Oh! it is no wonder that you will not appear among us poor terrestrials — Lovely Goddess! — Suppose for an instant, the Baron and I, to be your doves; and let us be harnessed to your car."—

"A pretty pair of doves, truely," said the Marchioness, "I doubt you have more of the Vulture about you; but no matter which — Here fly away with me," said she, presenting a hand to each; "Count, "to Monsieur du Blaisel,

"I leave you the charge of my graces, you will have no reason to complain!"

"Of the *good* graces of the Ladies," said the Count, offering his hand to Clara, "I should be too proud, but it is long since I have perceived how totally unworthy I am, to be so honored."

If Monsieur du Blaisel could ever appear more self-sufficient than usual, it was when he affected humility: this speech escaped him: for he had long lost his partiality for Clara, in his contempt of her insensibility to the merit of which he had so exalted an opinion.—She made no answer; but hurried after the Marchioness, who with all her accustomed vivacity, presented herself among her guests — related her adven-

ture, laughed at herself, and then at her conductors; and immediately began to arrange her parties.

In the card-room all trouble was spared her, the impatient actors, Madame de Blanville and many younger persons were already deeply engaged; for whatever may be the prevailing opinion in England, it is, a certain fact, that polite people in France, left off dancing much sooner than they do here. The Presidente would have been pointed at, twenty years before, had she offered to mix in a dance in public company; Nor could the Marquis du Plessis, who, in his youth had excelled in this exercise, however he might wish to engross the company of Clara, venture upon such an occasion, to transgress the established etiquette.

The Marchioness was handed by the Duke D'Orval to the upper end of the room; Clara, by the Viscount D' Avremont, and the Countess des Vallons, her sister a lovely and very young girl with their partners made up the first set. Four such beautiful women could not fail of attracting the crowd of gazers that way; yet our heroine was perhaps the least distinguished among them. Her beauty soft and unobtrusive consisted rather in the harmony of her features with each other, and the general effect of the whole, than in any thing striking in either of them, her style of dancing was the same, chaste and genteel; and not theatrical like that of her companions in the set. She loved this, like other exercise as an agreeable relaxation, and not as a lure for admiration; of course, she excited

much less of that sentiment than those who made it their sole aim, and was rather in eclipse among them; she was not however the less happy and satisfied, enjoying her pleasure unalloyed with the smallest degree of envy, at the loud and enthusiastic applause, so lavishly bestowed upon the three other Ladies.

In the interval between the dances, Monsieur D'Avremont, with his accustomed gaiety, flew about the apartment; requesting the Ladies to admire the soft innocent eyes of Venus's dove, to caress the pretty little dear; or at least to employ it on some commission: Madame des Vallons not appearing to understand the jest, he said in a sort of stage whisper, "that it was surprizing Venus should not know her own bird."—The Marchioness du Plessis, who was near

enough to hear this speech, said to him a little reproachfully;

"We are then several Venus's here, Monsieur le Vicomte?"

"That is," replied he without hesitation, "there are, as it is well known, various models, but certainly," bowing to her very low, "one only goddess; that yonder is, I rather think the Grecian, a very fine statue certainly, I believe I mistook it an instant for the Divinity herself; but the not knowing her *dove* quickly undeceived me. Oh! Madame, she might as well not have known her son."

"Now," said the Marchioness, "If she should chance to overhear you, as I did?"

"Oh, there is no danger, Madame, statues are not so quick, if she heard, she would not understand.——No, she is not a Venus for me; I should never fall in love with an image; even if I moulded it myself:—Give me living Venus's, all life, all soul, all spirit — such as there exists but one — the one I must ever worship."

"My dove is become a parrot," said the Marchioness, gaily, "*Mais allons Souper.*" She then gave her hand to the Viscount, and led to another apartment, where a splendid entertainment awaited the numerous guests. At supper Ciara was seated near the Marchioness, and as her friendship for the young Marquis was so truly disinterested, that she loved every thing that had relation to him, even to his wife; she did not fail to remark with pleasure, when all was

gaiety and unreserve how amiable appeared the disposition of Adelaide, when compared with that of her countrywoman and rival, the Countess des Vallons. There was such a frankness, such an artlessness, such a *naïveté*, in all that Adelaide either said, or did, or even looked; her heart such as it was, appeared so open to inspection, that she pleased universally and almost unconsciously; and never failed to excite interest, however she might esteem. She laughed at her own ignorance and caprices, as freely as at those of others; the women were disposed to forgive the superior beauty of one, who so readily allowed her inferiority in every thing else; and the men who do not love to have their usurped empire invaded, admired her the more for that deficiency of intellectual endowment, she so candidly avowed.

The Countess des Vallons, on the other hand, was of a quite different temper, she was perhaps, more beautiful even than Adelaide, but so evidently conscious of it, so affected, so *aprêté*; so pretending to excellence in matters totally out of her sphere, and of her knowledge, that she disgusted more than she charmed; and could be no very dangerous rival, to the natural and unpretending Adelaide. This, the latter readily perceived, and excelled herself in vivacity and attraction.

Madame D'Avremont, who had taken care to place herself near to Clara, observed to her in a half whisper, that it was no wonder if the young Marchioness, excited such general admiration.

"I think," added she, "if I were a man, I should be captivated myself."

"It is certain," said the Baron D'Ormond, who was near enough to overhear her;" that the unaffected graces of the Marchioness, and the amiable simplicity of her mind, are every way preferable to the pretensions to knowledge of some certain ladies, their overstrained refinement, their philosophical reflections, and all the parade of the prudes of sentiment."

Madame D'Avremont reddened at this speech, which seemed particularly pointed at her; and to conceal her embarrassment, again whispered Clara, without exactly knowing, what she meant to say. Her friend, whose distaste of the Baron was already very great, glowing with resentment, gave him so indignant a glance, that apprehending she might think herself included in his sarcasm, he attempted something like an apology.

"There is an age, Mademoiselle," said he, "a happy age, when every thing in a woman is becoming, even to that virgin coyness, whose fence, we birds of prey dare not invade; which conceals the mind, and covers the forehead with a veil of awkwardness; which ties up the tongue and fetters all the charms of conversation —*Mais ma foi*, when once she is married and past five and twenty, and knows a little of the world, if she still preserve her childish innocence and prudish airs and distance, she will very soon be left to the unmolested enjoyment of them—at least for me.—You, Mademoiselle, for some years to come, can only attract by seeking to repel; but every one is not in the same case."

Clara, not at all mollified, by a compliment paid her at the expence of her friend; and too much disgusted with the

Baron, even to dispute with him, turned her head away.

The senior Marquis du Plessis, who with the most gallant among the men, had declined a seat at table, in order that the ladies might be the better accommodated, and occasionally to wait upon them; had taken post between the chairs of Madame de Blanville and her niece; dividing his attentions between them with such impartiality, that an unconcerned observer would have been utterly at a loss to have decided to which he paid his addresses. But to court the elderly ladies, in order to obtain the young ones, was very customary in France; and the more expedient in this case, as it was the only chance of success. The Marquis was certainly, however his pretensions might render him

odious to Clara, a polite and accomplished man, whom the Presidente, was too happy to have in her train, whatever were his incentives.

During the supper, a negro servant of the Marchioness's having made a little too free with the wine, became somewhat unsteady, and as he was removing a dish from the table, spilt some of the sauce upon the silk cloaths of the Duke D'Orval, who nevertheless, bore his misfortune with great temper and magnanimity.

" 'Tis well, I was not near him!" exclaimed the Marchioness.

" 'Tis well indeed," said the Count de Blaisel, " for in that case the robe of Madame, might have saved the coat of

Monsieur, which would have been quite out of rule."

"That is not at all my meaning," returned the Lady, "It is well for the fellow, I would say, who would certainly have had a most violent box of the ear, had he been within my reach."

"He would have been too happy," said the Viscount D'Avremont, "suppose me the culprit, and let me receive the punishment from that lovely hand; I am sure it cannot hurt, nor its fair mistress be in anger."

"I detest unmeaning compliments, Viscount," said the Lady, "and I am very apt to take people at their word—have a care, when all you ask of me is a box of the ear, you may stand a monstrous good chance of being in-

dulged — Oh! had you seen me, but a few hours ago, brave as you may be, I should have put you all to flight—You would have taken me for one of the furies — I cannot help laughing at myself, no one ever underwent such sudden transformations.—Monsieur du Blaisel, I call upon you for a song."

The Gentlemen had all their complimentary stanzas in readiness; nor were those of the Viscount D'Avremont the least elegant, notwithstanding the contempt he affected for poetry and composition—and being evidently hit off at the moment, they procured him much credit and applause.

> To beauty's chariot yoke me still,
> In any fashion or disguise,
> Love may transform me at his will,
> So that I bear away the prize.

A bull, a swan, a shaggy bear,
A tempting show'r, like am'rous Jove;
But I my sweet disguise prefer,
Then Venus, keep me still your dove.

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"That is not so much amiss for an impromptu," said the Marchioness, "Who can beat it?"

"Many an impromptu," said the Count du Blaisel, "has cost a month's study—not that I mean to insinuate, this to be at all the case with Monsieur le Viscomte."

"You mean," replied the Marchioness, "that many a one would study a month, and not succeed so well; this I readily grant you."

The Viscount laughed and triumphed, "I am not the first *béte*, Monsieur," said he to the Count, "that Venus has transformed into a poet; you seem surprized; but my transformation into a dove is far more extraordinary. — Ask Madame D'Avremont if ever she thought of such a thing? Venus's dove of all things! I, the veriest sparrow upon earth, or rather of the air.—Oh! divine goddess, of what are you not capable!"

Monsieur du Blaisel much mortified at having his own stanza eclipsed, shrugged his shoulders at the want of taste of the Marchioness and her guests, and determined to compose for them no more. — His discontent did not however affect the mirth of the company, which lasted to a late hour. — At length it began to relax, and they to think of retiring; which as Madame de Blanville

had engaged in another card party, she was one of the last to do.

Clara passed a sleepless night; her spirits were unusually agitated by the entertainment of the evening. When they became a little composed, reflections upon the scene wherein the wife of her friend had performed so unbecoming a part, tormented her without ceasing.—It was impossible to her, not to compare the lot that had fallen to his share, with that she knew him to deserve. Never having witnessed such a paroxysm of phrenzy before, the more she thought of it the greater was her concern.

"Alas! my amiable friend, my brother!" said she in mournful soliloquy, "is this a wife for thee? Ah! why was she not given to Monsieur D'Avremont, who can slight all that is valuable and engaging in woman, to pay her such un-

becoming homage?——Oh! my dearest Father, take me to Montfier, and to your kind paternal arms, and save me from the chance of the unhappiness, it is my daily fate to witness."

Madame de Blanville, was very pressing to know, the particulars of what had detained the Marchioness so long from her company, but Clara proved far too discreet, on this head to be very communicative; and softened the relation she was obliged to make, as much as was consistent with her strict regard for truth.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### CONVERSATION.

Two days after that of the ball, Madame de Blanville received company, and the Viscountess D'Avremont arriving much before the usual hour, flew to the apartment of Clara; Therese withdrew, and the former, whose heart was overflowing with grief, began to pour it forth into the sympathizing bosom of her friend.

"Yesterday afternoon," said she, "as I was employed in my room, I was surprised by a visit from Monsieur D'Avremont; he approached me with an air of great gallantry, kissed my hand, and said a hundred flattering things. I will own to you, my dear friend, that I received these marks of attention with the most sensible pleasure; all my tenderness for him seemed reviving; yet as I know how much he prefers vivacity to sensibility, while my heart was ready to run over at my eyes, I stifled my feelings, and endeavoured to assume that air of thoughtless gaiety and indifference, that charms him so much in his admired Marchioness. In this way we chatted away an hour, which appeared to me very short and delightful—although I could not but remark, that he now and then seemed embarrassed and at a loss—it was soon explained—

would you believe it my dear? — Oh! these men!—His sole view in thus flattering and cajoling me, was to prevail that I should give a ball for the entertainment of Madame du Plessis! — I could hardly contain myself — Is it not too cruel, to be thus duped and played upon, and made confederate against my own peace?"

The innocent and inexperienced Clara, new to the world and all its train of complicated evils and injuries; heard this detail with perfect horror of the aggressor. "Is it possible," she thought, "to be at once so ungrateful, so base and cruel? and to sport so wantonly, with the feelings of such a wife and such a woman?" —after pausing a little, she thus replied:—

"Indeed, I am at a loss what to say to you, my dear friend, I find it as

difficult to give you comfort as advice; but what did you answer? did you accede to Monsieur D'Avremont's wishes?"

"I have ever done so," replied the Viscountess, "If I have lost his heart, I can truly say it is my misfortune, and not my fault; in this case, it was perhaps a weakness, for I might have found a hundred excuses; yet although I saw clearly through all his subtle pretences, I agreed to oblige him; but neither he nor you, can imagine half the pain it has cost me—Alas! my dear, I had persuaded myself, that I no longer loved him;—what I took for indifference, was pique, was resentment; the flame was smothered indeed; but by no means extinguished;—the slightest breath of kindness from my ungrateful husband, although I knew it to be deceitful, has sufficed

to rekindle it. I am jealous too—pity me, my dearest friend; I have no comfort but in you."

Clara embraced the Viscountess with tears, and the latter proceeded:

"I thought myself perfectly weaned from all attachment to a man, who has treated me so unworthily; but hearts like mine are not made to change. I now am convinced that my ungrateful husband, has never ceased to be the ruler of mine. Sometimes I think of him, with regret, sometimes with resentment, sometimes with indignation; but I always think of him, my dear, and from all these opposing sensations, how easy has been the transition to tenderness?—I recollect, that during my intimacy with the Baron d'Ormond, he used frequently to complain that I was always talking of my husband. It was very indiscreet,

my dear Clara, to make choice of a young man for a confidant.—Never do so however you may be destitute of every other.—Avail yourself of my experience. I alas! had no one to consult; and I hope my imprudence was excusable: it has been but too severely punished, by the unworthiness of him I loved and trusted.—Oh! my dear friend, slighted by a husband I adored; betrayed by a friend in whom I confided, how many ways has my heart been torn? yet ought I not to complain, since Heaven in its mercy, has sent me you."

Clara at a loss what to say on this head, endeavoured to turn the conversation into another channel; but every thing with the Viscountess led back to the ideas that occupied her mind, and nothing could divert her from them; either she attended to her friend not at all

or she found in the subject the most opposite, something to allude to her own situation and peculiar distress.

"I have been trying to read," said she, "but it is in vain, my eyes alone are on my book, my ideas can fix but upon one subject; composition is the only remedy—when I had not my Clara, I fancied I had a muse, and wrote bad verses—as she well knows."

"Do so again," said Clara, "as it answers the two good purposes of diverting yourself and me."

The company now beginning to assemble, the two friends were obliged to break up their interesting tête-a-tête, and mingle with the crowd. Both declining cards, they seated themselves at a little

distance from the table of Madame de Blanville, who was already deeply engaged. She had pressed the senior Marquis du Plessis into her service, and was complaining bitterly of the bad play, of a younger gamester, the Chevalier de Thierry; which she said, made her lose her money.

" You then are but an indifferent card player?" said Madame d'Avremont to him.

" I do not indeed," he replied, " pretend to play like those, who have done nothing else all their lives, nevertheless I can defend my purse."

" And sacrifice mine"—said the Presidente, a little peevishly.

The Marchioness du Plessis, who was at this moment announced, entered like

a triumphant conqueror, with a crowd of vassals in her train; among these were the Viscount d'Avremont, the Baron d'Ormond and several others of less note.

"Do not derange yourself, Madame," said she to the lady of the house, who made a motion as if to arise, "I have brought my own party, and here is a vacant table, of which I shall take possession."

She then seated herself; but the next moment perceiving Madame d'Avremont, flew to her.

"Oh! how amiable you are, Madame," she exclaimed, "to give a ball on purpose for me, as Monsieur the Viscount assures me, you do: you shall have a dozen in return; or any thing else you

like better, while I am a widow and my own mistress."

The Viscountess answered, rather coldly, "that the pleasure of obliging was its own reward," while the Marchioness instead of returning to her company placed herself in a vacant chair by Clara. Her train of admirers speedily followed and joined the circle.

"So," said the Count du Blaizel, "our party is then finished before it is begun."

"Yes," returned Adelaide, "that is the best way of finishing a card party, and the only way to finish it in good humor; Monsieur d'Ormond what have you there?"

"Some charming verses," he replied, "a little song, shall I have the honour of reading it to you?"

"Provided it is not too long," said the Lady; the Baron hesitating, she asked him why he did not begin?

"Nay," he replied, "I thought it possible, that like the card party, Madame might choose to have it finished before it is begun."

"That I cannot determine till at least I have heard the first stanza," returned the Marchioness.

Something between saying and singing the Baron read as follows:—

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Je viens de quitter ma Chloris,
  Pour suivre Clythere,
Chloris en pousse de hauts cris,
  Mais, je ne puis qu 'y faire:

On est bien en regle je crois,
Lorsque pour une belle,
L'on a brulé quatre grands mois,
D'une flamme eternelle.*

"Oh! shocking!" interrupted the Marchioness, "I will hear no more."

"Well, but Madame d'Avremont will I am persuaded; she loves poetry."

"I do not like levity, sir," said the Viscountess, turning from him, and at that instant the Chevalier de Thierry released from his party, came to her relief.

* Chloris, for another fair,
I but just have quitted,
The vex'd beauty tears her hair,
But the case submitted;
Can the lover be to blame,
Who three months told clearly,
With an everlasting flame,
Still has burnt so cheerly?"

" How have you fared ?" enquired Clara—

" I have beaten," said he " those who abused my play, which is a greater pleasure than winning their money."

" If they act as the vanquished are apt to do in more serious engagements," said the Viscount d'Avremont, " they must extol your talents in order to raise the credit of their own."

" At least," returned the Chevalier, " it is what I shall do by them; they are, I had liked to have said *old*, but most certainly experienced combatants that I have conquered."

The Abbé de Louverie now approached the circle, and the young Marchioness flying at the same instant to another end

of the saloon, drew away at least one half of it.

"Come, Monsieur l'Abbé," said Madame d'Avremont, "take this vacant chair, and give us news of the world of literature: have you any new books to recommend to us?"—

"I know of nothing worth your notice Madam," replied the Abbé, "except the letters I had the honor of presenting to Mademoiselle so lately. The public opinion is much divided upon them. What is your's, ladies?—has Madame de Maintenon succeeded in justifying herself with you?"

"With me, amply," said Clara, "I am delighted with her, and at a loss to imagine how any one can be otherwise."

"Yet certainly there are many," returned the Chevalier de Thiery,—"numbers, who will not allow, that virtue can be successful without the help of art.—I will own to you, that I am one of those, who are apt to distrust the purity of motives, whose end leads to such brilliant success. Madame de Maintenon's character is at least doubtful."

"If your only reason for thinking it so," said the Vicountess, "is the good fortune that attended her, I cannot allow your inference to be fair; vice is not always triumphant, though but too often so; nor is virtue always without reward, even here. The King, it evidently appears was naturally good hearted and just and only wanted to be made acquainted with virtue, to do it homage. I presume Monsieur you are not of those

prejudiced persons who dispute his marriage with Madame de Maintenon?"—

"No," returned the Chevalier, "that is too self-evident — It is not to be supposed, that any other than the King's wife, could have occupied the apartments of the Queen, could have written to the Duchess of Savoy on the subject of her daughter; and been called by the latter, sometimes Aunt, and sometimes Mamma; should have letters from the Queen of Spain, and so many others, who, whatever their principles, were tied by established rules from committing their dignity: it is only her views which I hold questionable: was it piety or ambition that kept her at Court? — Was it virtue or art, that procured her such an ascendant, over the heart of a voluptuous Monarch? — Do you think the letters explain these points satisfactorily?"

"I do," said the Abbé de Louverie, "and I even think that it is hardly possible for a sincere and unprejudiced mind, to read her letters, and doubt her integrity. Letters so evidently not fabricated, or ever intended for the public eye.—From early youth to extreme old age, they shew the mirror of a pure and spotless mind, open unvarnished, ingenuous concealing nothing, and having nothing to conceal; her youth clouded with misfortune and thrown by circumstances into the most equivocal situations, and among persons of the most licentious manners; yet uncorrupted, even unsuspected amid contagion!—No, as she herself says '*rien n' est si habile, qu 'une conduite irreprochable,*' and that was all her art, and all her witchery. She certainly was fortunate in having her virtue set in

* Nothing is of such ability as a conduct above reproach.

circumstances that could shew it off in the eyes of the King, and perhaps too in having Madame de Montespan for a foil; and that his eye so long inured to the dazzle of false brilliants, should so readily have done homage to the true.— As for the objections of that particular person who attacks her, they move as little as they surprize me. Can those who do not believe in God believe in virtue? — No, they will naturally consider all religion as hypocrisy, and protest integrity, as nothing but a cloak for interested designs; but such as aim at being virtuous themselves know uprightness of intention to be possible, and of course, where there are not manifest proofs to the contrary, believe it sincere." —

"Madame de Maintenon was not always pious," said the Chevalier, "and of her

conduct when young, there are various reports and opinions."—

"If she was not always pious," said Clara, "she certainly was always good: What frankness! What simplicity; what excellence of heart all her letters evince!—Oh! Monsieur le Chevalier, you must not say a word against her."

"I perceive I must not," said he. "Well ladies *you* certainly do well to stand up for a distinguished character of your own sex, who, whether supported by virtue or ambition, was incontestibly an extraordinary one: and it is perhaps, too much to expect of human nature, that a person thrown in the way of such elevated fortune, should reject it altogether.—Besides, to make a good use of power is doubtless as meritorious as to refuse it when

offered; and this, I do not mean to contest her."

"Very well," said the Vicountess, "we shall bring you over to our opinion by degrees; you are a reasonable man."

A great bustle here interrupted the conversation; Madame du Plessis, had broken up her party in the most interesting point of the game; her dog Azor she said, was extremely ill, for his little nose burnt like a hot coal, and she must instantly go home and send for a physician. The gentlemen crowded about her, to give their opinions on this important point. Some flew for medical assistance, while others escorted her; among these last, was the Viscount D'Avremont, whose assiduity about this capricious beauty, his lady, could not observe without an anxiety, that rendered her absent and

spiritless for the remainder of the evening. — Her ball took place in three days, at which she was a very passive performer; but the Viscount her husband little regarded her apparent chagrin, and made up with his attentions and vivacity for the deficiences of his lady. —

Madame des Vallons soon after gave a spendid entertainment, which was succeeded by various others; but with the readers permission, we will leave Clara to the enjoyment of a scene so new to her, to follow the Marquis du Plessis in the journey mentioned to have been undertaken by him a few chapters ago.

# CHAPTER XIV.

A PEACEFUL CAMPAIGN.

As soon as the Marquis du Plessis had acquitted himself of his military avocations, he turned his thoughts to his projected visit to Montfier, the difficulties of which, all enquiries considerably augmented; but the attraction over-ruled them all; he felt the anxiety of the fondest father, to embrace his infant daughter, and a romantic pleasure in undertaking hardship and danger in the service of Clara. He took with him, on

this expedition his servants, La Roche and Bonaventure; likewise a soldier of his own corps of approved courage and ingenuity, named La Pierre. They provided themselves with dogs, arms, ammunition, provision, and all things necessary for a winter campaign, whose length they could not exactly calculate, and which of itself they were sure, would afford no resource.

On their arrival at Saumur, they were informed that the roads had been impassable for a fortnight; heavy rains had been succeeded by a deep fall of snow, and the country was conjectured to be in the most impracticable state for travelling; this account did not however discourage our adventurers; the weather was now clear and frosty; they thought the moment favorable, and rising the next morning before day, they left their horses,

and set off on foot, the only possible manner of traversing this wild country, with the spirit of youthful adventurers, sanguine in their hopes of succeeding in an enterprize, that no one had ever even attempted before.

The first day's journey succeeded to admiration; they got a few tumbles, but killed a great deal of game, and at night found the awning of a ruinated out-house, or barn, which although it gave free admittance to the air from every point, was yet preferable to no shelter at all: fatigue atoned for soft beds, and warm coverings; they all slept sound, and arose with recruited strength for the next morning's adventure. The difficulties were however increased, the snow fell thick, the wind blew high and cold, and they were by no means certain of their road. La Roche's dog, a native of Montfier, was

he guide they most depended upon; but he was by no means a steady one, being liable to be put out of his way in pursuit of any game that happened to cross him. They were now obliged to have recourse to the stilts with which they were provided, to traverse the high snows, which not unfrequently concealed a stiff clay, very difficult and inconvenient to traverse, and from which they could not always extricate themselves without help.

The Marquis had a small compass which was of infinite use. Through all these difficulties it steered their way, and they arrived at the close of their second day's journey without accident: there was for this time however, no building of any kind, to shelter them from the inclemencies of the weather; but against this inconv nience they were in some measure provided: they sought the covert of a

thick wood, and the servants cutting som branches from it, kindled a fire round whic they spread their rugs over straw; an after taking their supper of part of th game caught the preceding day, which, as all French servants know how to cook, they dressed very tolerably; they wrapped themselves in their watch coats and laid down to rest, except one of the company who mounted guard, and was regularly relieved every hour; his business was to recruit the fire, and to keep off the wolves, whose howlings reverberated from the surrounding hills, were nothing less than composing.

The Marquis shared this severe duty with his men; he was far too humane and considerate to suffer them to exhaust themselves in a service undertaken for him, without endeavouring to relieve them. He chose the last watch, and having seen

he fire well replenished and a stock of wood in reserve, observing that his companions were much fatigued, he ordered them to repose themselves the remainder of the time; they obeyed with reluctance, particularly Bonaventure, who, nevertheless finding his master resolute, laid himself down by the fire, with his bottom turned to it, as the blacks always do at St. Domingo, where, notwithstanding the excessive heat of the day, the nights are cold to negro constitutions. The Marquis, to exercise himself prolonged his walk, and ventured a little beyond the light of the fire; as he was returning he heard a rustling in the bushes, of which a few were evergreens; he turned hastily, and at that moment a wolf darted from his ambush and sprang at a dog which was following him; the Marquis halloed and adjusted his piece with all possible dispatch, while Bonaventure, whom

anxiety and affection for his master had kept from sleeping, was as speedily on his legs; the assailant not less alarmed at the sound of a human voice, than at that of a gun, fled precipitately; the travellers, all roused, joined with ardour in the chace; but, as usual, the wolf had an accomplice, which, while they were engaged in his pursuit, had the boldness to attack their larder, and carry off the undressed remains of a deer of the preceding day's hunting. The first wolf was the dupe of this theft, he was shot by Bonaventure who had by no means lost his negro speed, and his skin brought off in triumph; but this hardly atoned to the travellers for the loss of their dinner.

"A pretty job, we have made of it;" cried La Roche; "so, we have got a wolf's skin, and lost our venison."

All rejoiced to see the morning break, they fortified themselves with a good breakfast, laughed at their preceding fatigues and difficulties, and set out on their third day's march, hoping to repair their loss in the course of it. As the sun began to appear, they descried in the distance, towering above the rest, the high hill which gave the name of Montfier to our village.

"*Courage!*" exclaimed La Roche, "there it is, the dear, dreary spot; just beyond that range of hills; we shall arrive there yet before summer, *allons marchons.*"

The weather this day rather favoured the travellers, and they pursued their way without meeting any thing remarkable, till towards noon, when they were surprized with the apparition of a man at some distance; he carried a fowling-piece, and

was followed by several dogs; those of the travellers soon came up with his, and began snarling and quarrelling in their accustomed way. The stranger observing that his dogs were attacked, hastened to their defence; he struck one of the assailants with the butt end of his piece, kicked another, and was laying about him with great violence, when the servants came up; they espoused the cause of their dogs with more heat than judgment, and a serious quarrel was likely to ensue, when the Marquis arrived just in time to perform the office of pacificator. He accosted the stranger with his wonted politeness, apologizing for the warmth of his domestics.

"Let us leave snarling to brutes, sir," said he, "when men meet it should be mutually to aid and assist. Any service in my power, Monsieur may command,

on his part he is probably acquainted with this wild country, and can direct us the readiest way to the Village of Montfier?"

The stranger, a dark ferocious looking man, with a beard of unchecked growth, answered sternly, "that he was unacquainted with the name of any place in the vicinage, and that he neither knew, nor desired to know any of its inhabitants." Having said thus much in as few words as possible, he called his dogs, and strode off in an opposite direction.

The Marquis more surprised at meeting a human being in these desolate regions, than at finding him of unsocial manners, was bewildered in conjectures, as to what he might be; his language, though rough, was not incorrect, and it was even doubtful to him if he sinned against urbanity, whether it was from igno-

rance of its laws. The observations of his companions did not tend to elucidate the matter ; La Pierre was of opinion that he was a deserter ; La Roche, that he was merely a poacher ; while Bonaventure, accustomed to hear in his own country of the Maroon or fugitive slaves, was not at all surprized to see something like one of them here. They pursued their way, entertaining themselves with their several ideas, and after a most fatiguing march arrived towards evening on the banks of a stream which the late falling weather had swelled to a flood ; they had already forded several others, but this threatened more difficulty and danger ; Bonaventure, as the most expert swimmer, offered to lead the way, and to try the depth, before the others exposed themselves ; he found a shallower part, and giving a good account, his companions committed themselves to the

stream; as the Marquis was following, a sudden swell from some unknown cause, increased the current so much, that he was unable to keep his ground; and was in the most imminent danger, when the faithful negro, with equal dexterity and intrepidity, braved the waves to his assistance, and conducted him in safety to the opposite shore. Neither master nor man could immediately recover the faculty of speech; and it would be difficult, perhaps impossible to say whether gratitude for the service received in the one, or delight at having rendered it, in the other, was the strongest sensation.

Though night was now gaining upon them, they agreed that it would be prudent to walk on as fast as possible, in order to dry their clothes, and warm their blood by exercise. They continued to do so till they arrived near the foot of a hill, co-

vered with wood towards the west, whence the snow having been drifted they were deprived of the light it reflects, and found themselves on a sudden enveloped in total obscurity, and very apprehensive that they had mistaken their way. Bonaventure having climbed a tree to reconnoitre, brought from thence the agreeable news, that he had discovered a glimmering light and much smoke, from which they could not be very distant; as he thought he could undertake to pilot to this indication of a human residence, his master and the party readily placed themselves under his guidance and pursued their way. The poor fellow was several times again obliged to climb trees to recover his beacon of which he continually lost sight; at length, through innumerable dangers and difficulties, and in total darkness, they arrived at a cavern on the side of the hill, through apertures of which the light and smoke had con-

trived to penetrate; a loud barking of dogs from within, further proved that it was inhabited; yet they knocked and called at the inhospitable door, for a long time in vain. A council was held on the expediency of forcing it; La Roche firmly persuaded that it was the habitation of a witch, vehemently opposed this measure, but his master being of a different opinion, and much more apprehensive of passing the night in his wet clothes without shelter, than of the very worst company he could meet within, peremptorily ordered the attack to be made; this decisive measure roused the insulated inhabitant, who now demanded from within, in a resolute accent, "Who they might be, that thus presumed to invade his retirement?" assuring them at the same time that although alone, he was well armed, and would repel force by force.

"We have no intention of offering the smallest violence," answered the Marquis; "we are benighted travellers, who only request a shelter from the inclemency of the weather; if you have the inhumanity to refuse us, we must necessarily constrain you; we mean no intrusion, and will pay liberally for the service you render us."

"If I admit you," returned the voice," it is indeed from motives of humanity; if I live here alone in these desarts, it is because I am neither to be bribed nor threatened.—I scorn alike your offers and your menaces, but you may enter."

He then pulled down the barricades that had opposed the admittance of the travellers, and by the dim light of a lamp, discovered the unsocial countenance of the hunter they had met with in the morning.

The Marquis first entering, bowed with his accustomed politeness.

" These are my people sir," said he, "all we ask of you is shelter for the night, we have provision in abundance, allow them to prepare it; we will not give you the smallest trouble."

The stranger led into his only apartment; a cave cut in the rock, which was neither spacious nor convenient; there was however a good fire; blocks of wood for seats, one somewhat larger for a table, and a few earthen vessels.

While the servants prepared the supper, the masters had enough to do, to quiet the dogs, who were still less disposed to be sociable; those of the hunter, were however, under such good command, that peace, or at least a truce, was at length concluded.

When the supper was provided, and the Marquis and Bonaventure had dried their clothes, the host, who at first had refused the most pressing solicitations of the Marquis to partake of it, allured either by the savoury smell, or the good example of the hungry travellers, of himself drew near and joined them; having drank off a goblet of wine, his heart warmed, and insensibly he threw off his sternness and taciturnity. The Marquis was surprized to find in him, a man of strong parts and good information, but who betrayed an utter ignorance of every thing that for some time past had been going on in the world. Having ventured a few questions on the singularity of his humour; they were so ill-received and cautiously evaded, that fearing to revive his reserve and austere silence, the Marquis was constrained to suppress his curiosity.

After a very chearful meal, the guests began to look about for something to supply the place of beds; the hunter offered a part of his dried moss; some ceremony ensued; at length they wrapt themselves in their rugs, and dogs and men laying down together, were soon snoring in chorus.

The next morning they all arose well refreshed; they breakfasted off the remnant of their supper, and the Marquis ordered his people to leave wine and brandy, unobserved by their host, in return for his hospitality. At parting they shook hands, while the stern features of the misanthrope softened into something like an expression of regret: Although really ignorant of the name of the village of Montfier, he yet knew it enough from the description of La Roche, to point out the situation: the travellers had indeed strayed from their mark, to find this

abode, but he put them in a way to recover their lost ground, and they set off with good hopes and spirits. The weather continued clear and frosty for the remainder of their march, and every night they had the good fortune to find some tolerable shelter: in short, from the ninth day after their setting out on their Quixotic expedition they arrived in safety at the hospitable gates of the Lord of Montfier.

Never surprize was greater than his on beholding the Marquis: but that the latter embraced him with smiles, and an air of the highest satisfaction, he would have imagined some misfortune to have befallen his beloved Clara, which his friend to soften, had undertaken himself to announce: — But the next thing he saw was her letter: —

" My dear good friend!" exclaimed he, " What am I to think of this?"

" You may think me a little mad, if you please," returned the Marquis: " Mine is however a happy madness — where is my dear girl?"

The little Constance was now produced; she smiled upon her father, and he thought his toil overpaid. — The Baron in the mean-time was devouring the very unexpected pleasure of a letter from his Clara; — Bonaventure and Rosette were in raptures, and the whole Castle rang with delight.

It may be supposed that the adventures of this perilous march, supplied an ample fund for conversation: every difficulty, every wonder ran gathering like a ball of snow through the village, and the good peasants came miles, merely to obtain a transient view of the heroes of such an undertaking. La Roche and La

Pierre, rather abusing the privilege of travellers to embellish, had composed a story that would not have disgraced the collection in the Arabian Nights: the harmless Misanthrope's cavern was represented as the den of a Polypheme, where they had narrowly escaped salting and drying; and every other marvel was proportionably magnified. The evenings in the Barn enlivened by the adventurers and their relations, never were so thronged or so pleasant before; in short, gentle and simple heard with regret, that at the expiration of a fortnight the travellers were obliged to return.

It was Monsieur de Montfier's particular care that this return should be well provided for; himself and a numerous escort of peasants with pick-axes, &c. accompanied the travellers the two first day's

march, part of the convoy continued to attend the remainder. Experience had taught the Adventurers to provide against many difficulties, as likewise to avoid some unnecessary circuits, and they regained the habitable world in two days less than it had taken them to leave it.

## CHAPTER XV.

### SICKNESS.

When the Marquis du Plessis arrived at his quarters, he found letters from his father of three different dates. The first had lain there a fortnight, its contents were to apprise him, that the young Marchioness, his Lady, having incautiously exposed herself to the night air, after being overheated in dancing, had been seized with a fever, attended with very

alarming symptoms. The second, in consequence of his not noticing the first, announced the disorder to be the small-pox. —The third was filled with reproaches for his silence and delay; and related the increase of the disorder and very imminent danger of the patient.

Reproaching himself for his unintentional neglect, he immediately took post, and rested night nor day, till he reached his father's hotel. That Gentleman, however, who next to death was in dread of sickness, had by this time deserted it, and withdrawn to his villa in the neighbourhood of Versailles. Vexed and disappointed at not meeting him in this hour of calamity, the young Marquis hardly waiting to make inquiries of his servants, flew to the apartment of his lady; which close shut and darkened, according to the mistaken method of treating the disorder

in those days, emitted a noisome effluvia, and appeared more like the habitation of the dead than of the living. He approached the bed, and opening the curtains, beheld by the indistinct gleams through the shutters, an object he never could have known for the late beautiful Adelaide. She lay motionless, and apparently lifeless; her countenance an unformed mass, where not a feature could be distinguished to prove it human; her eyes were closed, and her skin covered with a hideous crust, black and disgustful to every sense. She was totally insensible, but when her husband, shocked beyond expression, had seated himself beside her, suddenly drawing her hands from beneath the bed cloaths, where her attendants had been solicitous to confine them, and finding one of his in her way, she grasped it with a convulsive violence. —— The Marquis could no longer refrain his tears;

he wept over the late lovely, but now loathsome hands, from which he could scarce withhold himself from shrinking—and thus derived relief from the very excess of his affliction. Meanwhile the physician was announced, and giving way to him in silence, with eyes fixed upon him, he waited in speechless anxiety the sentence he should pronounce.

He was a man of equal judgment and experience, and of the first character in his profession: after the most minute investigation of the state of the patient, and numberless questions to her attendants, he bade the Marquis be of good cheer.

"Your Lady, sir," said he, "is certainly not worse than when I saw her last, and that is a strong argument that she is better.—She is undoubtedly in much

danger, nor can I pronounce upon her state with any degree of confidence.—Her stupor however is no very bad symptom. She has youth and a good constitution on her side. I have known people that were worse recovered."

Somewhat relieved by the opinion of the physician, the Marquis was prevailed upon to quit this dismal apartment, and take a little rest and refreshment, of which he was much in need.—He then recollected the letters from the Baron to Clara, of which he was the bearer; but uncertain whether she had ever had a disorder which rarely contaminated the pure region of her birth; he would not run the hazard of delivering them himself; but dispatched a servant with orders to give the packet into her own hands.

Clara received with delight and perused

with eagerness her father's letter, which was every thing that was consoling and kind. By it she was authorised peremptorily to refuse every offer to which she was herself averse, however supported by the authority of her aunt; and particularly that which was the subject of her application and her uneasiness; and upon which head the Baron had written at the same time to Madame de Blanville.

"Our good friend," said the Baron in his letter, "little thought he was himself "a party in the affair for which he was "so kindly solicitous; for which he en-"countered such peril, fatigue, and diffi-"culties. Would you believe, my dearest "Clara, that he was himself the bearer "of your letter, over such roads as hardly "ever were attempted at this inclement "season? — With his wonted generosity "he prevents our thanks, and attributes

" all the merit of the undertaking to a
" father's solicitude to embrace a darling
" child. — I can allow the full force of
" such an impulse, it would lead me
" great lengths; but the pleasure that
" sparkled in his eyes when he delivered
" your most welcome packet, fully con-
" vinced me, that friendship, not less than
" paternal tenderness, had its full share
" in impelling him to this hazardous en-
" terprize.—His adventures in traversing
" our winter wilderness, have afforded am-
" ple field for discussion; they are rather
" too long for a letter; I reserve them
" for your amusement, when we meet,
" which I trust will shortly be.—I shall
" set off to fetch you as early as possi-
" ble; the Chevalier, for so I must always
" call him, has shewn me the way.

" We have some weddings in agitation,
" which are not to be solemnized till

" the return of Mademoiselle: Louisot has " made his election to the great satis- " faction of us all.—Your protegée, Su- " sette, is the happy girl."

Clara next perused with much pleasure the infantine prattle of her brothers, who each had contributed their efforts to fill a *large* sheet of paper in a *large* hand for her entertainment. She then repaired to her aunt, to deliver to her, her share of the dispatches. The good Lady was much surprized to receive at this season, a letter from her brother; she did not however interrupt her game to look at it; but desiring Clara to place it upon the dressing table in her apartment, continued to play out her hand.

Our fair heroine rejoiced at an opportunity again to peruse the letters, which had given her so much satisfaction; returned

to her apartment; where Therese, as usual, was at work. Clara read to her the letters of her little brothers, and all the village news contained in that of her father.—In the midst of her communications, the waiting woman, who had taken up the cover of the packet, suddenly interrupting her, exclaimed, "Oh! dear Mademoiselle, what a very odd smell this case has! I really believe it is of the small-pox."

"What a foolish fancy!" replied Clara, "as if you could possibly know the smell of a disorder, you never in your life was near."

Nevertheless, she could not herself help shuddering as she took the paper from her maid, and either really, or in imagination, discovered it to have a very particular and unpleasant odour. She immediately threw it into the fire with an

uneasy sensation, for which she could not herself account.

The paper had indeed been in the chamber of contagion. The Marquis du Plessis, wholly taken up with anxiety for his Lady, had never once thought of removing it from his pocket-book previous to going there; and changing his clothes immediately after, he forgot the circumstance, and consequently never thought of the least precaution. Now, whether the packet had really contracted any infection, or whether the power of imagination had acted upon Clara, as forcibly, as some pretend it may; or whether she had already imbibed infectious air, it is certain that she sickened within a few days; and about the period that the Marchioness was pronounced to be out of danger, the eruption made its appearance on Made-

moiselle de Montfier. As a little previous to this, she had been seized with convulsions, her aunt, in great terror, and in the utmost haste, removed to the country, leaving her neice to the care of nurses and dependants.

The young Marquis du Plessis, hardly relieved from his apprehensions on the danger of his wife, heard with inexpressible concern of that of his friend. He recollected the packet, which in the confusion of his mind, he had sent without the precaution of having it fumigated; he reproached himself as the cause of her malady, and underwent the most excruciating anxiety; which was further increased, when he heard, that the Presidente had, with such unpardonable selfishness, abandoned her to the care of servants and mercenaries.

Meanwhile Adelaide recovered apace; the disorder which had been three and twenty days before it turned, during seventeen of which she had been totally insensible, seeming content with the ravage of her beauty, spared her life, and gave way to returning health. As soon as she could open her eyes, her first request was for a mirror; this however, upon pretence that her sight was as yet too weak to look upon glass, her attendants had the prudence to refuse.

The violence of her disorder having a little subdued that of her spirit, she bore this contradiction with tolerable temper.

"Is my face like my hands?" she enquired of her husband.

"It is covered with scales, that will very soon fall off, my dearest Adelaide,"

said he, "and be succeeded by a redness, which will also in its turn disappear."

On the first day of leaving her apartment as she entered the saloon, a large pier glass full in her view, reflected a face which at first she could not believe to be her own. She started—cast a look at the attendant who was supporting her, then at the too faithful glass.

"What is that hideous object?" she enquired, trembling at once with rage and horror, "Is it me?"

"No, Madam," answered the negress, trembling still more, "it me."

"Thou! vile wretch! detestable liar!" exclaimed the frantic Marchioness, giving her at the same time a box of the ear;

and then flying at the still more innocent glass, she attacked it with all the strength rage could bestow, crying and stamping like a fury.

The confused noise of screams, stamps, and shattered glass, echoed through the house, and brought the Marquis to the scene of action, where his convalescent Lady, foaming with passion, was venting it, now upon the mirror, now upon her own disfigured countenance, which streaming with blood, offered a spectacle hardly more of pity than of horror.

He took her unresisting from the room; her violence had exhausted her newly recovered strength, and she fainted in his arms. She was put to bed, and a severe return of fever was the consequence of her delirious exertion.

Clara on the other hand, attended by her faithful Therese, who made up in attention, her deficiency in experience, felt her disorder increase without impatience or alarm. Madame d'Avremont was the only one of her Aunt's numerous acquaintance and nominal friends, who would venture near a sick bed. Even her daughter, Madame du Quesnoy contented herself with sending a servant to make enquiries; but the Viscountess was a constant visitor; she never failed to see Clara every day, and would sometimes spend the whôle of it at her pillow, watching her with the solicitude of a mother. Thus their mutual affection nourished by kindness on the one hand and gratitude on the other, took every hour deeper root.

On the ninth day, from the appearance of the eruption upon our fair heroine, it

began to turn, and she was permitted to leave her bed: soon after, as Madame d'Avremont was keeping her company; not having as yet seen her face, since the first attack of this cruel foe to beauty, Clara felt a little uneasy, and enquired of her friend, if she was not much altered?

"Totally, my dear," answered the Viscountess, "it is well, you have such a stock of philosophy, or you would never survive the loss of so much beauty."

Clara forced a smile, and at that instant, the junior Marquis du Plessis was announced. She was about to refuse his visit, but he was following the servant, and did not allow her time.

"This is Mademoiselle de Montfier," said the Viscountess to him as he entered

the room, "I announce her; for you perceive, she is no longer *reconnoissable*."

"I perceive, indeed," said the Marquis, making his obedience, "a few envious spots on the face of Mademoiselle, which like those on the sun disfigure one fair object, no more than the other; but which unlike them, will soon disappear."

"How long has my old friend learned to flatter?" said Clara, "indeed, unless I could suppose that either of you valued me merely for my face, I could very well support to know, that the little advantages it might boast, had disappeared."

Madame d'Avremont producing a pocket glass, said, "Come, we are about to try your fortitude."

Clara glanced timorously at the mirror, and was not so little of a woman as to observe without pleasure, that she was by no means disfigured, except by a few spots, which she knew, would speedily wear away.

To the enquiries of the Ladies after the Marchioness du Plessis, her husband answered, that she had recovered her relapse, but that a deep melancholy had taken possession of her mind, which seemed to partake the alteration of her person.— Clara heard of this double change with sensible concern.

"I hope soon to be able to visit Madame la Marquise," said she, "I am happily no longer fearful of contagion. — How pleasant it is to be eased of troublesome apprehensions!"

The Marquis du Plessis felt as grateful for this speech, as if it had been said on purpose to console him, under the reproaches he continually made himself, for having perhaps contributed to give the infectious malady to Clara; and when with her eyes swimming in tears she extolled the kindness and attentions of Madame d'Avremont he inwardly partook the emotions of her gratitude, and reprobated the injustice he had committed, in having ever suspected that lady of coquetry.

After spending the morning, in rational and lively chat with the fair friends, the Marquis du Plessis returned to his home with a heart eased of half its oppression, the never failing effect of a visit to Clara.

Therese, whom no apprehensions on her own account could ever have kept from at-

tendance on her mistress; was now sickening with the first symptoms of the same cruel disease; and although the hotel of Madame de Blanville was spacious, and capable of accommodating a large family, at a safe distance from each other, in any contagious disorder, yet could not that Lady be prevailed upon to return to it, while any sickness was within its walls. Clara, though much distressed at thus banishing her Aunt from her own house, was yet more averse to sending from it, the faithful girl, whose obnoxious illness was procured in attendance upon her. These cares she was happy to return, and by frequent visits, to excite the emulation of her less enlightened and less solicitous nurses.

The disorder of the waiting maid proved however of the most favorable kind; and in

a fortnight's time, she was able to go about her usual avocations. Madame de Blanville as soon as she was apprised of her recovery disposed herself to return to Paris; and sent word to her neice, that the carriage in which she came, should attend to convey her and her maid for the benefit of air, to the house she was quitting; and that in the mean time, she herself should reside with her daughter, till her house at Paris had been well aired and fumigated. With this arrangement Clara was the more delighted, as Madame d'Avremont offered to be the companion of her retirement.

A few days previous to this removal Clara accompanied by the Viscountess, paid a visit to the Marchioness du Plessis: Much as she had heard of the alteration that had taken place in this unfortunate

beauty; it still fell short of the truth, nor could she without difficulty conceal the emotion it excited.—

Adelaide was reclining upon a sopha in a negligent morning dress; a large cap concealed half her face, as well as the loss of her beautiful profusion of hair: what was visible of the first, covered with seams and scars, had not yet lost its redness; her arched brows were half eaten away; her large black and sparkling eyes spoiled of their long silken fringes, were circled with the inflammatory hue of disease; her fine turned nose disfigured; the dimples that played about her mouth changed to dells; in short, never ravage was more cruel or more complete.

The alteration in her manner was not less apparent: the very sound of her voice

was changed; she hardly answered the kind enquiries of her visitors; but having just raised her head from the pillow, immediately returned it to its position.

The Marquis du Plessis had been endeavouring to amuse by reading to her, and as soon as the sympathizing attentions of the visitors had a little roused her from her stupor, she excused herself for it, by saying that, "her husband had been reading her to sleep."

"Mademoiselle de Montfier is not altered," said she with a deep sigh, "she,—whose beauty could so well have been spared,—while the poor Adelaide who had nothing else. . . . . . . .

"My dearest Adelaide," said her husband taking her hand, "it is intirely in your

power to make the loss you regret so much, the happiest event in both our lives. — What is mere beauty to those with whom we spend our days? — A month's possession can deprive the most beautiful face of its lustre and its fascination; and no more is requisite to accustom the eye to the least alluring. Personal charms are striking only to the cursory beholder; and often a snare to him and a misfortune to its envied possessor — My affection for my Adelaide will only be the greater for the loss she has sustained, if losing her beauty, I find her heart — Oh! the delicious exchange, and how happy may we yet be!"

Adelaide listened to this tender speech with averted eyes, and at the close of it, said to Clara,

"Because his reading has not sent me to sleep, he has a mind to try what his preaching can do."

Nevertheless when the scheme of going into the country was mentioned, eagerly catching at it, she exclaimed,

"Oh! for pity, take me with you—I detest the country, but I abhor Paris,—any change will be a relief."

The Marquis very agreeably surprized seconded the motion, the fair friends were nothing loath, and it was soon settled that Adelaide should be of the party to *Chateau Gaillard*, the country seat of the Presidente de Blanville.

"Perhaps," said the Marquis, "if Madame finds the country air and such charming society to her taste, which I

think, she can hardly fail to do; she may be induced to return with Mademoiselle de Montfier, and to spend the summer months with our little Constance."

"I am dead," answered the Lady, "and care not where or how soon you bury me—send me to the Antipodes, if you choose—I dread to be seen; and abhor to see."

# CHAPTER XVI.

## CHATEAU GAILLARD.

It was the beginning of March when Clara and her friend arrived at the country seat of the Presidente de Blanville. The season was in some forwardness, the spot of itself delicious; the grass of a tender green; the spring flowers in bloom; the buds bursting from their confinement; the lark and the thrush welcoming their arrival. — Clara and Therese thought themselves in Paradise, or at Montfier.

Very different were the sensations of the Marchioness du Plessis, a few days after, when accompanied by her husband, she joined the party.

" Here you are both !" exclaimed Clara, as they entered the saloon, " Oh, how amiable is this of you !"

" It is very stupid," returned Adelaide, " and proves how dreadfully I am fallen —at nineteen to be attended by no one but a husband — Alas ! two months ago, had the poor unhappy, degraded Adelaide; but thought of coming hither, she would have brought half Paris in her train ; all of it indeed, that was worth attracting."

" We have here a little circle," said Madame D'Avremont, " that would console me for all Paris, and I hope Madame la Marquise, will soon be of the same opinion."

"The Viscount, your husband, is at Paris, I think Madame," said Adelaide, with a half smile, —

"Madame is recovering her vein of pleasantry," said the Viscountess. — O! we shall do yet."

For several days Adelaide persisted in her sulleness, with immoveable constancy, and with a violence to herself, that in a better cause would have been perfect heroism. Nothing pleased, nothing amused; nothing excited either interest or attention. As she neither read nor wrote, never used her pencil, her needle, or played upon any instrument, it was no easy matter to make her time pass pleasantly in retirement. Languid from weakness, and still more from chagrin, she would loll the whole day upon a sopha without speaking or moving, but to take her meals; and even these were brought

to her by her attendants. The Marquis in despair at the ill success of a scheme on which he had built so much; and apprehensive that her sullen resistance to every species of amusement, might be very irksome to the fair friends, was upon the point of proposing to her to return to Paris; when he perceived a few gleams of sun shine, now and then to pierce the gloom; and seem to promise hopes of an amendment. Adelaide, whose appetite ever since her removal to the country, had been invariably good, began to recover her strength, and with it a small portion of her vivacity; which although she checked in some degree, she she found it impossible wholly to subdue; or to continue any longer, this state of living death. She would now saunter about the house and gardens, leaning upon her negro woman, capricious, and insupportable even to herself, like a fro-

ward infant: by degrees youth, health and spring, a serene air, regular hours, and chearful company began to take effect, to tune the nerves of the dejected *ci devant* beauty; and to make her chearful in spite of herself. She was even sometimes surprized into laughter and a share of the conversation; or to a little attention to the interesting readings, with which the Marquis would frequently entertain the Ladies over their work.

Her husband remarked these auspicious symptoms with delight.

"It is Clara," he would say to himself, "Oh! I was certain, that if once I could bring Adelaide within the sphere of her attraction, my work would be in a manner accomplished. No, her youthful and flexible heart, can never resist the united charms of beauty, benevolence, innocence,

chearfulness, sense and virtue, — in a word, of Clara."

There was an oratory in the vicinage to which Clara would frequently resort; although the chateau was not without such an accommodation within the walls; but an agreeable walk led to it, and it reminded her of Montfier. Adelaide, now become so companionable as occasionally to walk out with her friends; as she was one morning strolling with Madame D' Avremont, they by chance, came this way; and entering merely from curiosity, surprized Clara and her attendant at their devotions: they arose at this interruption; and the former joined her friends in their walk and their conversation, with her accustomed ease and chearfulness.

Madame D'Avremont who nevertheless, had often seen Clara occupied with books of

piety, now for the first time expressed some astonishment.

"I never should have suspected you for a devotee," she said, "you are always chearful and never censorious: I have learned to be afraid of persons of that description; and am a little doubtful that had I suspected you for one, I should have shunned, as much as I have courted you."

"Your prejudices, my dear Madam," said Clara, "would have appeared very strange to me some months ago; but since I have had the advantage of visiting Paris, I am quite accustomed to hear people who have little or no religion, accuse of their own failings, all who have any.— You shall come to Montfier, my dearest friend, and learn to love piety and its votaries for the sake of the worthy man to whom I will introduce you."

"Mademoiselle de Montfier," said the Marchioness, languidly, "is an exception to all rules; she would make one like any thing she chose to be; but every body knows, that devotees are always morose, censorious, envious, ill-natured, insupportable old frights——though it is very possible I may become one myself; if it is only for the sake of being of some consequence, now that I am fit for nothing else.—I never used to trouble my head about what other people did; but now that I have nothing to do myself I may very likely turn censor general; and abuse and pull to pieces all that are young, or gay, or handsome. — Oh! yes, I am just fit for a devotee."

"Fitter than you imagine, my dear Madam," replied Clara, "the stronger your prejudices, the more you will be disgust-

ed with them, when once you are convinced that they are ill-founded."

"Oh! yes," rejoined Adelaide, "I am ugly enough, and shall soon be ill-natured enough for a devotee."

One morning, as the little circle were enjoying an interesting conversation over their work, Adelaide excepted, who was lolling upon the sopha with her dog; they were apprised of the sudden arrival of the Presidente's maitre d'hôtel and cook, with immense baskets of provisions, announcing their Lady and a large dinner party, for whose entertainment they were to make speedy preparations. The Marchioness at first brightened up at this news; but turning mechanically to a mirror, as she had been accustomed to do, when it was wont to assure her of approaching conquest; the altered countenance it now

too faithfully reflected, struck her with sadness and dismay; and starting from her seat, she insisted upon setting off immediately for Paris.

"What now, my Adelaide," said her husband sorrowfully, "that we are so well here?"

"Stay here, if it suits you, Sir," said she, in a tone of indignation, "but you shall not constrain me, I have too long borne your tyranny—do you think I will remain here to be made a show and a mockery?"

The poor unhappy Adelaide now giving vent to her ill-humor and injustice, raved like a bedlamite, loaded her husband with the most ill founded invective, accusing him as the author of her misfortunes, and terrifying the ladies who were witnesses of her indecent violence.

Apprehensive of the uneasiness, so troublesome and captious a companion might give to his friends, the Marquis thought it advisable to give way to the storm, after having in vain essayed, by reason and expostulation, to appease it; he therefore ordered his servants to make ready, and in about an hour from the arrival of these unpropitious messengers, relinquished the tranquil retreat, where he had began to enjoy comparative happiness.

Clara grieved to part with her friends, and to part with them under such circumstances; nor was she at all consoled that their place was to be supplied by a giddy tumultuous crew, so little to her taste: an agreeable surprize however awaited her; Monsieur de Montfier happened to arrive in Paris that very day, and was in time to take his place in his sister's

carriage: Clara running to meet her Aunt, could hardly believe her own happiness, on finding herself in the arms of her father.

We shall pass slightly over this tender scene, as well as the very gay one which so immediately succeeded it; for we are almost as impatient as the Baron and his daughter to regain the little Paradise they had quitted.

A very unexpected event, which we shall briefly state, procured them an addition to their party: the senior Marquis du Plessis, whom we last noticed, as escaping to the country from the melancholy and contagion of disease, and the mortification of a rejected suit; for the Presidente had found herself obliged to apprise him of the formal refusal of her brother of the honor of his alliance, to

console himself, made frequent visits at the house of a widow lady in the vicinage, who had five unmarried daughters; she was a clever notable managing woman, and instructed the youngest of them so well to play her cards, and spread her toils, for the tender heart of the old gentleman, more vulnerable for its late disappointment, that on the return of his son and daughter to Paris, he introduced to them a gay and blooming mother in law!——The young Marquis bore this misfortune as became him; but his lady was outrageous; she never would see the bride after the first introduction; and this last having very soon made it appear, that she was not of a temper to put up with slight or disrespect, it was found absolutely necessary for the peace of the two families, that there should be a separation: in this state of affairs, the proposal to accompany the Baron and his daughter to

Montfier, was most chearfully embraced. The Viscountess d'Avremont had already engaged to be of the party. — These with their necessary attendants formed a numerous escort, which the Presidente de Blanville, promised to follow so soon as Paris should have lost all its other attractions.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE PROSPECT BRIGHTENS.

Adelaide bore the fatigue of the journey incomparably well; change of scene amused her mind, and change of air exhilarated her spirits. She was such good company upon the road, that her husband began to felicitate himself upon the loss of her beauty.

On their arrival at the Castle, Clara's first impulse was to fly for the little Constance; the child was alarmed at the

sight of strangers, and her mother received her as if she had been one indeed. She however observed, as any other stranger must have done, that it was pretty.

"At least," said she, "when people will not believe that I have been handsome, I can produce her, and say, such was once her unfortunate mother!"

All the village crowded to greet the return of the family, with a joy as artless as it was sincere, while nature seemed to put on her gayest attire to bid them welcome. The season was peculiarly forward, Clara's flower garden had not been neglected, and offered a beautiful variety of the earliest gifts of Flora.

The walk to the octagon bower in particular displayed a luxuriant profusion of tender foliage, intermingled with the

bloom of wild fruit trees, and affording all the shade the mild rays of Phœbus just then required: the path was strewed with primroses, and perfumed with violets; while the bleating of lambs from the pastures below, filled up the pauses of the lark and the nightingale.

In vain did Adelaide endeavour to preserve her gloom, amid the general smiles of nature; whenever she was off her guard, she was cheerful in spite of herself; her heart naturally warm and good, began to expand; and to share, instead of interrupting the happiness of her friends.

This desirable change did not however manifest itself all at once: on their first taking their collation in the octagon bower, while the Viscountess was in raptures at the beauty of the surrounding scenery, and ready to fancy herself in Arcadia;

Adelaide, a little fatigued with the up-hill walk, preserved a sullen silence, and seemed to enjoy neither the prospect, the music, nor the company.

Clara, to whom her father had just presented a new song, on the first solicitation of the Viscountess to sing it, began as follows:

---

Lo! where the sun, winters vapours dispelling,
 Decks with gay green both the meadow and grove,
Azure the heav'ns all azure excelling,
 Fragrance and bloom wheresoever we rove.
Sing and be joyous, away with repining,
 Discord so sad would springs concert annoy,
Wisdom and virtue to pleasure resigning;
 Call us to join in the general joy.

Hark! to the lark singing sweet as she's soaring,
 Hark! to the linnet, the blackbird and thrush;
Breathe the sweet gale, health and vigor restoring,
 Perfume extracting from every bush.

Who can remain an unfeeling spectator,
  Senseless and sad, and devoted to spleen?
Blotting the beautiful picture of nature,
  All else so gay, who would wish to be seen?

Rouse then, my friend,—life is worth the enjoying,
  Duties are pleasures, when faithfully done;
Banish *ennui*, ev'ry moment employing,
  Happiness may be attain'd by each one:
Nature kind parent, is rich in variety,
  Endless the flow of her fountain benign;
Pleasures that give nor remorse nor satiety,
  Wait but thy welcoming to be made thine.

---

In spite of the apathy affected by Adelaide, she listened with some attention, while Clara was singing.

"Was that song made on purpose for me, Monsieur?" she said to the Baron, "say yes, or I shall be very angry. I can forgive the reflection it conveys, only

upon consideration of its having been written expressly for me. I despaired of ever inspiring another—I thought my influence at an end."

"On the contrary, fair Lady," returned the Baron, "your best influence is just now beginning, if you allow, as I am persuaded you do, the influence of reason to be superior to every other."

"That is not so certain," answered the Marchioness, "you know that in my own country, I was accustomed to rule over slaves, with whom reason would have had very little influence.—On my arrival at Paris, I found as many slaves and as little reason as at St. Domingo—willing slaves too ——Oh! reason, *C'est un triste personnage.*"*

* Is a dismal thing.

"You shall have friends instead of slaves," said the Baron, "will it not be an exchange for the better?"

"Friends that would controul instead of slaves that would obey me? Oh! no indeed, not at all," said Adelaide gaily and advancing towards the vista: she was thus roused for the moment, from her languor, and continued to mix in the conversation with increasing good humor, for the remainder of the evening.

On the following Sunday, after vespers or evening service, the young peasantry assembled as usual to dance on the lawn before the castle. After looking on for some time without the smallest inclination to ridicule the ungraceful performers, Adelaide of her own accord, offered to join them. The Baron having danced with her a little, then presented her to

Louisot, whom she did not affect to disdain; but enchanted the rustic party as much by her condescension, as by her transcending excellence; nor was she by any means insensible to the delight she gave; but enjoyed her little triumph from the simple effusions of admiration of the honest peasants, as much, or perhaps more, than she had formerly done, what all Paris could boast of taste and elegance.

The Viscountess d'Avremont on her part, ever disposed to be pleased, was charmed with every thing—the cottages, the walks, the peasants, the children, and above all the worthy pastor, by turns, furnished enjoyment to the benevolence of her soul, and the energy of her feelings. She was of all Clara's charitable visits, and being remarkably fond of children, Basil and

Isidore were often the attendants o
her own.

As soon as the Marquis du Plessis sa
things in such a fair train; Adelaid
covering her looks and her spirits; a
quiring a relish for the country; learn
ing to ride—he left her to the care o
his friends, and prepared to join his re
giment; from whence he proposed t
make frequent excursions, in order to en
joy the progress of the improvement
his Lady. He set off with a heart in
nitely more at ease, than since his ma
riage it had ever been; for the swe
hope of domestic happiness, union an
tranquillity, gilded once more the hori
zon of his prospects. To these delight
ful anticipations, we will leave him a
little, and with the reader's permissio
return to our mountaineers.

# CHAPTER XVIII.

## FRIENDSHIP AND INTEREST.

In about a week from the departure of the Marquis du Plessis, his loss was in some measure supplied by the arrival of another guest.

The family were enjoying the beauty of a serene evening in May, in the Octagon bower; the music and the collation had been conveyed thither. Ma-

Madame d'Avremont being requested to Sing, recollected an air of which the two last stanzas were as follows:

" * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * *

But, oh! from friendships ſoothing voice,
And ſympathetic heart,
From cordial kindness,—social joys,
'Tis pain indeed, to part!

Believe, tho' borne afar from you,
The frame material strays,
Still ling'ring on the last adieu,
The pensive spirit stays.

---

These lines brought so forcibly to Clara's recollection the parting scene, wherein their common friend, had been so principal an actor, on the eve of his departure for St. Domingo, that she could hardly refrain her tears. This did not

escape the observation of Madame d'Avremont.

"What, in my little song affects you thus?" said she to her, —

"My father knows," Clara replied; "it reminds me of our separation from an old and very dear friend."

"And that friend is dead?" resumed the Viscountess;

"No Madame," said the Baron; and the subject dropt at this discouraging monosyllable.

The two Boys, who had been amusing themselves with gathering flowers, and throwing them at Constance, as the little girl chuckling and trotting along in her leading-strings made feeble attempts to catch them; on a sudden changed their pursuit

and came running breathless with haste and eagerness, to their father :—

" Oh, Papa ! here he is — here he is indeed !" — And in an instant appeared Mr. Forrest.

Great was the joy of the meeting on all sides, though the expression of it varied in each ; while the Baron and his children were warm and ardent, in their demonstrations, the Englishman was half an hour before he could articulate, and Clara precisely the last person whom he addressed.

The ceremony of introduction to the two visitors over, the party arose, and set off on their return to the Castle.— Basil and Isidore took each a hand of Mr. Forrest, running by him, and asking him a hundred questions in a breath.

"I should have been with you at least a fortnight sooner, my good friends," said Mr. Forrest, "but I have brought with me so numerous a suite, requiring care and precaution, that I almost began to fear I should never get here at all. — I have nags for you all; saddles *à l'angloise,* and even a groom."

Although Adelaide had been formally introduced to Mr. Forrest, in the little hurry and trepidation of his first arrival, her name had escaped him, and having heard much of the beauty of the young Marchioness du Plessis, and nothing at all of the small-pox, he had not the remotest suspicion of her identity; and put the company to some confusion by an ill-timed question concerning her before her face; for which attempting to apologize he increased the general embarrassment, as aukward people are very apt to do.

With the utmost good-humour, the Marchioness relieved him from his distress.

"My oldest friends could not know me, Sir," said she; "I am sure my own mother would not — even my voice is altered — nothing can be more natural than your mistake; you have probably heard of Madame du Plessis as a pretty Woman, and could not be expected to recognize her under features hardly human."

Mr. Forrest wished to have assured her, that he thought her frankness and good humour far more engaging than beauty, but had not courage to speak his sentiments.

The next was a busy day. Mr. Forrest had brought from England, every thing that he supposed could be either

useful or agreeable to the family. Unpacking, displaying and presenting engaged them all. Among the variety of presents for Clara, there were some to spare for her friends; each of the ladies were induced to accept a trinket of English manufactory. The Marchioness was particularly delighted with the beauty of a steel watch-chain, and the air of frankness deference and respect, with which Mr. Forrest proffered it to her acceptance.

"I cannot refuse this gentleman's present," said she, "he looks almost as if he thought me handsome still."

After a few days the study of English was resumed, and Mr. Forrest was well pleased to find that if in the absence of the master no great progress had been made, at least, nothing had been lost of former attainments.

The fair visitors desired to be of the school, and very much delighted the little boys, by condescending to take lessons in reading of them. Basil was not long in learning by heart a new Allegory, which Mr. Forrest had brought with him from England. — it was as follows:—

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## FRIENDSHIP AND INTEREST.

### AN

### *ALLEGORICAL TALE.*

In a neat straw-roof'd Cottage, a green hill beside
  Which flowering Hawthorne and Hazle o'ergrow,
Where adown the steep ridges two rivulets glide,
  And meeting, unite in a baſon below;

And ev'ry wild flow'ret is scatter'd around,
  That lures from the rose fickle Zephyr to stray,
And ev'ry sweet bird in the thicket is found,
  That tunes to the morn its mellifluous ay;

Friendship and Int'rest; half brothers were
they,
their Sire for the same rustic calling design'd,
nurtur'd and taught in the very same way,
diff'ring in person, still less than in mind.

rosy-cheek'd cherub of frank, open brow
And eyes of the softest celestial tint,
With glossy, brown ringlets that wave as they flow,
Of Friendship, the youngest, might give you a
hint.

But Int'rest seem'd stamp'd with the crows-foot of
Time
His lowering brow was indented with care,
The canker Solicitude, fed on his prime,
And distrust tied his tongue, and embarrass'd his air.

Their Sire, old Discernment had married two wives;
Of the first, Worldly Wisdom call'd, Interest came:
The second was Reason, whose name still survives,
And Friendship was born of this sapient dame.

At length the good widower fell sick and die[d]
And left to his children his crook and his co[t]
They mourn'd; but in youth ev'ry tear is so[on]
And Sorrow, tho' poignant, is quickly for[got.]

Ere blushing Aurora retir'd from the Sun,
Young Int'rest awaking, impatient arose,
And rummag'd the boxes and draw'rs ev'ry one,
While Friendship incautious, lay hush'd in repose.

If the slumbering youth seem'd about to awake,
On tip-toe sly Int'rest would silently creep,
The curtains draw close, and the cot softly shake,
For Interest still can lull Friendship to sleep.

His hoard was compleat, ere his brother awoke:
Together they toil'd, or their lambkins they kept;
And when Int'rest reclin'd in the shade by the brook,
Then Friendship watch'd o'er him as heedless he slept.

Each day like the other, pass'd smoothly along;
But the neighbours remark'd and sly gossips would say,
How Int'rest grew fatter, more stout and more strong,
While Friendship declin'd and seem'd wasting away.

He toil'd thro' the seed-time, he toil'd thro' the spring,
The vines dug and prun'd, and the garden he clear'd;
But Autumn with harvest was now on the wing,
And Friendship with Int'rest no longer appear'd.

A soft-featur'd beauty, with languishing eye,
And cheek of a paleness that much her became,
With her father Benevolence dwelling hard by,
Belov'd was of Friendship, Compassion her name.

For her was the gift of the callow young brood,
By the sickle bereft of the sheltering grain,
For her was the youngling escap'd from the wood,
Whose dam by the pityless hunter was slain.

The kidling deserted, the motherless lamb,
The maid in her bosom would foster at eve;
For comfort to her, every mourner still came,
For her voice sympathetic, ne'er fail'd to relieve.

How oft on her bosom has Friendship reclin'd,
And pour'd out his griefs to her pitying ear!
How often the cankering wound in his mind,
Has been sooth'd, if not heal'd, by the balm of her tear!

Now morning arose, and fierce noon-tide went by,
  And ev'ning envelop'd in shadows the plain;
And vainly the maid strain'd her anxious eye,
  And vainly she watch'd for the step of her swain.

For still, to his toil as he went or he came,
  At morning, at noon, or at close of the day,
The white shelter'd cottage, where dwelt the fair dame,
  Whate'er his direction, was always the way.

" Alas! he is stretch'd on a suffering couch,
  " And no one is near to lament him or aid;
" Shall maidenish coyness forbid my approach,
  " And Compassion forsake him? — Ah never!" she said.

" Oh, Friendship, where art thou? — attend to my cries —
  " Say, what are thy ills? — and why hidden from me?" —
" My brother has left me;" sly Int'rest replies;
  " Our substance we've shar'd; and he's gone beyond sea."

Dejected the maiden regains her abode,
  And wets her own couch with those generous tears
Which oft for the sorrows of others have flow'd;
  For great was her grief, and still greater her fears.

Suspicions arise, and strange rumours are spread,
  The villagers murmur, nor scruple to say,
By the hand of his brother, that Friendship is dead;
  And Int'rest's accus'd of the foulest of play.

The truth of the story, none now can explain;
  To various conjectures it still causes birth;
But those who believe that thus Friendship was slain,
  Affirm 'tis his ghost that still wanders on earth.

The child's next task was to put the Allegory into French prose; this, with a little assistance, he accomplished.

"Oh, that wicked Interest!" exclaimed the youngest boy, when the translation was read; "And did he really kill his

brother?—I thought nobody ever did so, but Cain."

"He certainly did not kill him," replied Mr. Forrest, "He only sent him to Montfier, which was not doing him an ill-office."

"Oh, now, I know!" cried Basil, eagerly; "it is Mr. Forrest himself that is Friendship."—

"You are partly right, my dear boy," rejoined the Baron, "Mr. Forrest is indeed Friendship itself, but he was not sent hither by Interest."

Our English Philosopher much delighted with the child's artless flattery, took him between his knees to caress him, while all applauded, and the Marchioness could hardly believe that he had not been prompted.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### VARIETY.

The Presidente de Blanville relinquished her scheme of coming to Montfier this summer, in favor of one gayer and much more to her taste, that of accompanying a party of her friends to Aix-la-Chapelle; nor did this her determination excite much regret. The little circle was wholly occupied with the Marchioness du Plessis, who became every day more amiable and more interesting. From

often hearing select readings by one or other of the family, she insensibly acquired a taste for mental enjoyments, and once initiated, her progress was rapid, and her taste for them very soon surpassed her late disgust.

Clara was her tutoress, and the directress of her studies; she allured her pupil in the first place by amusing fictions, of which her collection had none, but such as were well chosen, and instructive; till by degrees, she began to read or hear a moral lecture, or even a sermon, without disrelish.

After an absence of about two months, the Marquis du Plessis returned to Montfier. Adelaide received him with a pleasure, which sparkled in her eyes, and enlivened every feature; he thought he had never seen her look half so handsome.

"How beautiful you appear to me, my dearest Adelaide," he said, "your face used to hide or to eclipse your mind, and were the veil to such real and lasting loveliness ever so fair, still we cannot regret that it is removed."

The Marchioness met his embrace with tears of delight, in which all the company were ready to join.

The little Constance was now beginning to prattle, and with her infantine caresses awakened all the mother in Adelaide, who set herself to instruct her in all she was then capable of learning, with a patience, that nothing but maternal affection, could have ever inspired her. Her husband who came for a month, unable to tear himself from his new found happiness, remained three. As the winter approached, he proposed to his Lady,

now far advanced in her pregnancy to return to Paris; but she would not hear of it.

"If you like me as I am, and where I am," she replied, "suffer me to remain here; all necessary help may be had for sending for—I am under no uneasiness."

Madame d'Avremont, likewise of her own accord, determined to winter with her friends.

"I have shared your pleasures," she said, "let me likewise share your pains—shall I be only your summer friend?"

This resolution, though Clara never would have proposed it, was infinitely agreeable to her, she loved Madame d'Avremont with the tenderest affection, had the greatest delight in her society,

and perceived with the most cordial satisfaction that the lessons and example of the good Curé, had not been lost upon her friend; and that her well disposed mind had wanted nothing but opportunity, to take its proper bias.

Adelaide likewise, having no longer any irregular or misplaced inclinations, began to look upon piety without affright, and to acquit herself of its consoling exercises, at least, without distaste.

The Marquis settled his regimental business, so as to be able to winter with his Lady and his friends; and thought he never experienced such heart-felt delight, as the pleasure this arrangement appeared to give the former.

"You will then stay with us?" she said, tenderly embracing him.

About the beginning of it, she presented him with a son. During her consequent confinement, all the society were unremitting in their endeavours to make it pass away agreeably; and Madame d'Avremont was not less assiduous than Clara, although she would frequently say, "that she envied her." — "Alas!" said she one day to this last, "why must I sigh over the happiness of others? Oh! were my husband but like this man!

"Let us invite him to Montfier," said Clara.

"Alas, my dear," returned the Viscountess, "we might as well invite him to Siberia; he would consider it as not less a banishment."

We should have noticed in its proper place, the marriage of Louisot with Susette, which was celebrated under the

happiest auspices, soon after the arrival of Mr. Forrest. This Gentleman presented the new married couple with various implements of husbandry upon an improved construction, which he had brought with him from England: all the society at the castle likewise contributed some gift towards the housekeeping. They were settled in a snug farm, and this little establishment was soon quoted as a pattern, of union, industry, and good order, throughout the village. A little room at their abode was fitted up, in the English gothic style, under the direction of Mr. Forrest; and here it was a great regale for the castle company to resort, to eat fruit and cream, and to enjoy the happiness of the young couple.

The winter stole away imperceptibly, while Adelaide gained every hour upon

the affection of her husband and her friends. She herself suckled her little boy; a most unexampled instance of tenderness in a Lady of high rank, in those days. Nor did this domestic engagement lead her to neglect her mental attainments; for which her ardor increased with her progress; and which her natural vivacity, properly restrained and directed, much facilitated.

With what delight did the Marquis, her husband, second her endeavours, and give her the assistance of which he was so eminently capable! often would he repeat that beautiful stanza of Hammond's; (for he likewise was of the English school), which by this time, such was the progress she had made, his Lady could both understand and feel—

"What joy, to wind along the cool retreat,
"To stop and gaze on Delia as I go;
"To mingle sweet discourse, with kisses sweet,
"And teach my lovely scholar, all I know!"

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The generous and affectionate Clara enjoyed without alloy the happiness of her friends; but the English philosopher, became every day more silent and more sad; he altered perceptibly; the Baron, still more concerned for him than his other friends, in vain essayed to wring from him the secret of his distress.

One evening when the family had retired to rest, the Baron having occasion to return to the saloon for a book that he had left there, surprised his English friend, leaning on his hands over the table, and wrapt in such profound meditation, that he did not perceive his

entrance; nor recover from his reverie, till the Baron took him by the hand, and affectionately enquired the cause of his chagrin.

"I am ashamed to own it to myself, sir," answered Mr. Forrest, "how then?...

"No reserve with friends, I intreat you," said the Baron, "grief imparted, must needs a little evaporate, and lose of its poignancy.—We all perceive that some secret grief consumes you—do not suffer it to gather strength for want of confidence in those who love you."—

Then going himself to the cellar for wine; he filled out two bumpers, "*Allons,*" said he, "*a l'Angloise,* here's to friendship and mutual confidence;" and offering one to Mr. Forrest, he drank off the other.

The philosopher, for some time resisted the importunity of his friend, and the effects of his liquor; their united assaults succeeded however at length, and drew forth the imprisoned secret, which was nothing else than an almost hopeless passion for Clara.

"My opinion of myself is too humble, Sir," said he, "to think of offering to you as a son-in-law. On the score of fortune I could indeed suggest some advantage: I would renounce my native country, which believe me is no small sacrifice—my affairs are in such a train, that I could immediately dispose of my estate for its full value; a purchaser is at hand, and the produce would certainly turn to good account here; it would be seed sown on good ground; but to you, who think so little of money, and

to Mademoiselle, who never thinks of it at all, what imports these considerations?"

"My good friend," returned the Baron, taking him by the hand, "I have seen so much of your worth, and am so well convinced of your virtues, that could my daughter be brought to see with my eyes, I should be the happiest of men; but from some cause or other, she does not seem inclined to marriage; and I never will attempt to constrain her—cultivate her affections, you have her esteem; endeavour to secure her heart; you have my free leave to use every honest endeavour; but I would advise you to avoid any direct or premature declaration; let it, if possible be wished and expected before it is made — I, on my part shall keep your counsel, and take no notice of what has passed."

Although the supply of ready money which this alliance held out to the Baron, who had always been cramped in his schemes of improvement, for the want of it; was an advantage of the most alluring kind; and that he was well aware, the least hint to his daughter of his wishes, would engage her to accede to them; yet did he, with the most punctilious delicacy, avoid giving her any. In the mean time Mr. Forrest, supported by the approbation of the father, felt less constraint with the daughter, and was enabled to give the agreeable as well as amiable endowments of his heart, and mind fair-play. Clara accustomed to his society and his peculiarities, respected and regarded him as a friend, enjoyed his conversation, was perfectly at ease with him, and continued to take lessons of English with increasing avidity; it indeed was her favorite study; but a

distaste to marriage, for which she herself could not, or rather did not seek to account; but which certainly took its rise from an early preference of another, long blinded her to a discovery she so little wished to make. Madame d'Avremont had sometimes rallied her upon the increasing assiduities of her English tutor; till assuming a very serious air, she had silenced her once for all.

"I beg of you, my dear friend," she said, "to forbear talking to me in this strain; I have a pleasure in the conversation of Mr. Forrest, which will be entirely done away, nay be turned into distaste, the moment I am a convert to your opinion.

## CHAPTER XX.

### DU HAMEL.

At the beginning of the spring, as Rosette with little Constance, and Therese with her young masters, were seeking wild flowers in the woods, they were alarmed by the firing of a gun, immediately succeeded by the most piteous groans. The women in the greatest terror, were for running away; but the eldest boy with intrepidity and humanity equally above his years, insisted upon exploring the cause.

" They are thieves and robbers!" said Therese, " They kill us all," said Rosette, the little fellow was not however to be deterred; and fearful either to go with him, or to suffer him to go alone, the women remained trembling and irresolute on the spot, where first the alarm had reached them, while Isidore holding by his brother, timorously followed as he broke his way through the under-wood, directed by the continued groans. They soon arrived at the explanation of the affair; at a thicker part of the wood, a man lay extended and bleeding on the ground, with several fierce dogs growling about him and a gun by his side. The wounded person quite senseless, and just now ceasing to complain, was to all appearance, effectually released from his misery.

"Who has killed you?" said Basil, shuddering and standing aloof, while he shook his little stick at the faithful, but ferocious guards, to keep them at bay: meanwhile the women were slowly following.

"Where are you master Basil? where are you master Isidore?" "For Heaven's sake answer us," called out the females.

"Oh Therese, here is a poor man quite dead, — do run quickly to Louisot, I saw him in the field, as we came along, — make haste! make haste! we will stay here the while."

Therese, however, remained within hearing of the boys, while Rosette, with her little charge ran for help. Louisot was fortunately coming that way; who never requiring any pressing in the cause of

humanity, was soon at the spot —. Arrived there he was at no loss to account for the disaster; the gun that did the mischief he perceived, must have burst, or gone off by accident. The dogs not opposing his approach, he examined the body, while one of them, even fawned upon him, with an air of confidence and acquaintance.

"Thou art a good sagacious fellow," said Louisot, "We will talk to thee by and by." Saying this, he raised the body, and dispatched the females with his hat for water to the nearest spring: having washed off the blood which covered and completely concealed the countenance of the wounded man, he discovered with mingled pleasure and surprize, that he was succouring an old acquaintance, even la Vengeance his friend and Captain! An involuntary exclamation was however, all

all that escaped him; immediately recovering his presence of mind, he reflected, that the life of the unhappy man was doubly in his power; he therefore determined to conceal his knowledge of him and to act with the utmost circumspection. He found upon examination a wound in the head, which did not seem very deep, he washed it, and binding it up with the handkerchief of Basil, contrived with the assistance of the females to get a little water down the throat of his patient, who was now beginning to shew symptoms of returning sense; after a little he revived, and looking around him with surprize, and in silence, suffered himself to be assisted to rise. Some other peasants by this time reached the spot; and he was conducted to the cottage of Louisot, which happened to be the nearest, without appearing to

recollect the person to whom he was chiefly obliged for these services.

The children and servants now hastened home to the Castle, over-flowing with the tidings of the marvellous adventure which had befallen them. Further help was immediately dispatched from thence Bonaventure, who had really some skill in the treatment of wounds, and La Roche as assistant surgeon, both attended, and recognised in the wounded stranger, the forester who had afforded the Marquis and them a night's lodging in their memorable ramble, the winter before the last. As soon as this circumstance was made known to the Baron, he directed that the wounded man should be removed to the Castle; for better care and accommodation; but this last, whose real name was Du Hamel, having now discovered under whose roof it was, that

he had been so hospitably received, absolutely refused to be removed from it; "I will be obliged to none but thee," said the stern Misanthrope to Louisot. He was in effect not to blame, in this determination, he could no where have been nursed with more care; Susette eager to second her husband's intentions, watched him as if he had been her father, and his wounds both of body and mind, healed apace under such benign influence.

The Marquis du Plessis was not backward in repaying the enforced civilities he and his people had received from Du Hamel; he watched the progress of his amendment, and contributed towards it all that kindness and benevolence could suggest.

"Thy friend, it should seem," the Misanthrope would say to Louisot, "thinks himself obliged to me, — he owes me nothing; his gratitude is a reproach for the niggardly service I rendered him."

The worthy Pastor in his visits to his parishioners frequently called upon Louisot; and although he was not yet in the secret of Du Hamel's *ci devant* profession, yet easily perceiving, that the seclusion he had chosen was not the effect of piety, he would frequently turn the discourse to serious discussions and by the best arguments, enforced in the most persuasive manner, endeavour to inspire him with proper motives for his apparent austerity.

To these well meant hints, Du Hamel did not at first attend at all; far less did he answer them; yet by degrees,

the kindly drops succeeded in indenting a heart, which accidental causes had hardened; and which was naturally just, generous, sincere, and even humane.

When perfectly recovered, he acceded to the proposal of Louisot to accompany him to the church, placing himself however, but just within the door, where he could hear; but neither see or be seen. It was on a Good Friday; and Monsieur du Plessis, without the most distant idea, of adverting to the feelings of any particular person, had chosen for the subject of his discourse, the accepted repentance of the dying thief.—The sermon seemed on purpose for Du Hamel, he was deeply affected, and so incapable of concealing his emotion that it was fortunate he had placed himself where it could neither be observed, nor he sus-

pect it was designed for him — He was the first to leave the church, and did not say a word to Louisot of the impression he had received there; it was not long however without appearing; he no longer required inviting; but was always the first to attend the summons of the bell, till having continually witnessed the edifying devotion of the good peasants, and the simple but impressive eloquence of their teacher, of his own accord he sought an interview with him and made him a full avowal of his misfortunes and his crimes: From this worthy man, he received all possible consolation and encouragement; and an earnest exhortation to fix his abode in the village; and by rendering himself as useful as possible to his fellow creatures, endeavour to atone to God and to society, for the offences he had committed against both.

The Baron, to whom, Monsieur du Plessis obtained leave of Du Hamel to communicate his story, readily allotted him a small portion of land, in the vicinage of Louisot, where he himself constructed a habitation, and cultivating his little domain, continued to reside many years; giving the example of industry, sobriety, charity, and every virtue; and never suspected for what he had been. He nevertheless, always affected solitude, and avoided company; yet would open to the Baron and his friends, when they called upon him, and afford them great delight, by the originality of his ideas, and his singular manner of conveying them.

Louisot had not neglected to enquire after his dangerous friend Henriot; but could learn nothing of his fate.

"I know not what became of him,"

said Du Hamel, "nor of any of the others. after thy desertion, confidence, and security were at an end, we soon separated; each one providing for his own safety as well as he could, without caring for his neighbour, as usual. I secured a complete provision of arms, powder and shot, with a little money, and betook me to the forest; nor do I recollect having spoken to any human creature, till the accidental meeting of the travellers who found me out among the snow."

The little money of which Du Hamel spoke, being solicitous to atone for his former injustice by every means in his power, and under the impossibility of restoring to its proper owners, he deposited with the good Curé, in order that it might be distributed among the necessitous of his parish.

# CHAPTER XXI.

## A CONTRAST.

While the Marquis du Plessis was on duty with his regiment, the Viscount d'Avremont having been to visit an estate in the neighbourhood of Tours, signified to his Lady, that, if perfectly agreeable to her, he would take Montfier in his way, and have the honor of conducting her home. She received this message with a palpitating heart.

"What can it mean?" said she to Clara, "I am lost in amazement!—Monsieur d'Avremont coming *here*, and after *me!* Or rather, is it not after Madame du Plessis?"

Meanwhile alternate hope and fear, agitated the bosom of the Viscountess, and chaced the tranquillity she had so long been enjoying. When her husband arrived, he saluted her with equal coldness and politeness: it was in the afternoon, the family was assembled in the saloon, and the young Marchioness, whom he had not chanced to meet since the loss of her beauty, with her youngest child on her knees, and the little Constance playing close beside her, offered a picture so totally different from what he had formerly known, that he did not in the least suspect whom it represented, and paid his respects as to an

utter stranger; this at first a little embarrassed her; however presently recovering herself she arose, and curtesying very low, accosted him with her usual ease and vivacity.

"Monsieur le Viscomte, I have the honor to present to you, the Marchioness du Plessis; and these are her children—you may believe me, indeed, it is she herself."

Monsieur d'Avremont now embarrassed in his turn, made an attempt to apologize for not recognising her; he succeeded but awkwardly, for the real and obvious reason, it was not possible to give.

"I recollect perfectly," said he, however forgetful I may appear, that the amiable Marchioness, used to profess a

perfect antipathy to children, how then could I expect to find her, surrounded with them, and under so different a character ?"—

"Under so different a face, you may as well say at once," replied the Marchioness, "you know I always hated dissimulation, in that, at least, I am not altered."

Monsieur d'Avremont having enquired slightly after the health of his Lady, took post by the Marchioness, and seemed to aim by the most marked attention, and the utmost complaisance and assiduity, to atone for his mistake, and to convince her she had by no means lost her empire with her beauty. In regard to the last, indeed, many were of opinion that she had hardly sustained any loss. Her eyes which had never been

robbed of their peculiar brightness and expression, had by this time perfectly recovered their clearness, the vermilion of the purest health, and of the most perfect serenity, still improved their lustre. Her hair, which had not yet attained its former luxuriant profusion, curled round her face in tender ringlets like that of her children, and was only confined by a handkerchief tied round her head with careless elegance, in a manner peculiarly becoming to her: a little plumpness, which by no means injured the elegance of her form, was every day filling up the traces the cruel distemper had made; while her natural vivacity, inspired by the knowledge she had acquired in her retirement, and controuled by reason and decorum, was more than ever engaging.

The Viscount felt and acknowledged the power of her attractions; but he soon

found that she was as much altered in mind as in person; that she was become a wife, a mother, and a Christian; and though she would chat and laugh with him, with the most perfect good-humor and unreserve; yet did she steadily keep him within those respectful boundaries, her first appearance had prescribed.

During his short abode in the village, he gave much of his time to the diversions of the field; in one of these rambles, he discovered Laurette, who was married to a young and industrious farmer, and resided about a league from the castle. Her beauty both surprized and delighted him; and he immediately hit upon an expedient of improving his acquaintance with her; he told her, that he was ordered to drink new milk from the cow, and that he should return every day, at an hour he named, to take it from her hands. Laurette blushed and

curtsied; and the Viscount returned to the castle flattering himself that he had found an amusement for his leisure hours. He did not fail to be punctual to his own appointment; but instead of Laurette, met her husband, and was soon convinced that the wives of the peasantry at this distance from the metropolis, were as inaccessible as their superiors.

He had been so eager to set out on this adventure and returned with so disconcerted an air, that the Marchioness immediately discovered that something had occurred to chagrin him.

"What is the matter with the great baby?" said she, "will it have a rattle, or a sugar plumb, or a pretty little hobby horse to keep it from pouting?"

"There is something in the air of

this place," he replied, "that inspires prudery; the very wood nymphs are all Daphnes. — You, yourself Madam, have not been able to resist the contagion— Oh! I must be gone, what with Mr. Forrest's spleen, and the air *farouche* of all the women, I am a lost man if I stay here two days longer, and shall be found floating in some ditch. — What say you Madam?" to his Lady, "Will it be inconveniencing you, to hasten our departure."

Clara answering for her friend, insisted upon the term first agreed upon.

"Well," said he, "I am always at the disposal of the Ladies; but if I am as humoursome as the baby Madame la Marquise is pleased to call me, and as dull as Mr. Forrest himself, you must put up with it."

"You perceive my dear friend," said Madame d'Avremont to Clara," when they were alone, "how little hopes there are of this man, and how much we flattered ourselves, in fancying that he might be influenced by good counsel or example.

"I do not yet despair," returned Clara, "I caught him this morning reading Bossuet; he is sometimes serious, when off his guard; reflection will come next, then repentance, then amendment. Oh! I assure you he is in a fair way; and after the total change we have an example of, is it allowed to despair of any one?"

"The change you hint at," said the Viscountess, "is indeed a striking one; but the subject was far more promising; the youthful plant had a sound root, and branches yet pliable; but these stubborn men, when once they have ta-

ken a wrong bias, are far too stout and unbendable for correction; the vicious shoots must absolutely be cut off; they can no longer be trained to rectitude; and except people have the resolution to do this themselves . . . . Our young friend has a good understanding and an excellent heart; there was ground to work upon, but where the head only is good, and there is no heart, no root — a lightness at the mercy of every wind, how can I flatter myself with the least good fruit?—Alas! I see too well! . . . . .

"You see through a mist, my dear" said Clara, "Yet the extraordinary gaiety of Monsieur d'Avremont, one would think might dispel it."

"It has quite a contrary effect with me," replied the Viscountess; and at that instant the subject of their conversation

entering the room, it was of course diverted to another channel.

The next day was a holiday, and the Viscount, from pure listlessness, and having no other way of disposing of his time, attended the ladies to church.

"How did you like the sermon?" said Clara to him, on their return.

"I did not like it at all," he replied, "It was too long by half, and too serious by the whole—however I could not help attending to it a little—your Curé, has a sort of an impressive manner that would almost persuade one he is in earnest. — There was a man of a very peculiar cast of countenance, and much apparent devotion, who would have struck me very much, if two pretty wo-

men had not been just on the opposite side. —— What is he, pray? the village lawyer or physician? he is certainly not a peasant."

The subject of the Viscount's enquiry, was Du Hamel; Clara related all that she knew of his history; and the Baron proposed to make his abode in their way home, observing, that he was an interesting character; and every way deserving the notice of an intelligent stranger. The Viscount agreed to the proposal, and the ladies were left to the care of Mr. Forrest.

"I have been to see your wild man of the woods," said Monsieur d'Avremont on his return, "and if you can but cure him of being so sententious, I think it

would be a good speculation to put him in a cage, and send him to Paris. Your account of his being caught when wounded, with a little heightening, would make an admirable introduction, and altogether, I have known wonders of far less note, bring all Paris to a focus."

"And these are your most serious reflections, upon so singular and so respectable a character?" replied the Marchioness, "truly, Sir, they do you great honor, and Paris likewise, if a man of wisdom and virtue is so great a rarity there, that he would be shewn for a spectacle."

"My dear Marchioness," resumed the Viscount, "how very severe you are become, you, that used to be so indulgent! If I must not laugh at wisdom and virtue, as you call these odd things, you

may as well send me to the next door cave to that of your hermit, or to that of Trophonius at once—there is nothing else to laugh at here.—Look at Madame, turning up the whites of her eyes; now if she would but assume your character, as you have taken up her's, I don't know but for want of better amusement, I might become enamoured of her.—Monsieur Forrest, you that are a traveller, were you ever in any country, where the men fall in love with their own wives?"

"You could not do better, Sir," said Mr. Forrest, "than to set the example, and you are so fashionable, and Madame so amiable, that I am persuaded it would be followed."

"That is well answered," returned the questioner, "I don't know but I may

think about it—but no, that is not the right way to proceed; rather, I must not think about it."

After vespers, the young peasantry assembled as usual to dance on the lawn before the castle; the Viscount was delighted, and mingled in the entertainment with all possible glee; he singled out the prettiest lasses for partners, said so many fine things to them, and was so pointed in his attentions, that the Baron observed him with much dissatisfaction.

"Here is a man," said he to Mr. Forrest, "who will undo in one hour the labor of a whole year of our good Curé, a very wolf among his lambs, he will turn the heads of the girls, disgust them with their honest simple equals; raise a spirit of rivalry, envy, and discontent; and these are the very least evils to

be apprehended from his remaining here—at least, there shall be no more dancing—I ought to have foreseen this."

A sign from the Seigneur, immediately put an end to the festivity: the young people were all discontented; and the old ones hardly less so. Madame d'Avremont had too much penetration, to overlook the cause of all this; she plainly saw that her husband gave umbrage; and that the Baron was apprehensive for the peace and innocence of his villagers; she therefore proposed the next morning to leave Montfier: the Viscount, though no longer in such a hurry to remove, was yet too polite to refuse his lady's desire; and they accordingly set out on their return, leaving the society a little consoled for the loss of the wife, by that of the husband.

Clara was however concerned at the ill success of a visit, from which she had hoped so much, and to be thus forced to become an unwilling convert to the opinion of her friend, that no favorable change was to be expected, or affection or gratitude to be hoped, from a man who shewed no symptom either of feeling or reflection.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### A CATASTROPHE.

The tranquillity of the family and of the village, was soon after cruelly interrupted by the sudden indisposition of the benevolent Seigneur: some slight symptoms of fever at first disregarded, a few days increased so much as to confine him to his bed; and to excite the most serious apprehensions for his life. A singular prejudice against medicine and its professors, had induced

him invariably to oppose the settling of any physician in the village; and to give the most positive injunctions, that in case of his own illness, no one should be sent for, or any remedy administered, but such simple, innoxious and long tried recipes, as the good houswives of the village, were in the habit of preparing themselves. This peculiarity was the subject of great uneasiness to his friends; Clara consulted them all; and sought with avidity some pretence of evading the order; the Marquis du Plessis, arriving in the interim took this upon himself, and set off post for a physician.

One evening as Clara, in the absence of the attendants was anxiously watching by her father's bed, she was more than ever alarmed and distressed, by his frequent sighs and long restlessness; at

length unable any longer to stifle her emotion, she gave up to it and sobbed aloud.

"Clara, my dear child," said he, "why do you give way to such immeasurable grief?" — She sobbed the louder.

"My dear," resumed the sick man, "did you think me immortal, or have you never accustomed yourself to reflect on the probability of an event, so much in the course of nature, as my going the first?"

Clara, still answered only with her tears; and he continued.

"That your good heart will be pained my dearest child, at the loss of a tender and only surviving parent, is too natural and too just to be reproved; ne-

vertheless, if it pleases God, that this sickness is to be my last, let me die with the satisfaction of being convinced that your grief for me will be that of a reasonable being and a christian; not like those who have no hope of a future and better life, or any providence for that wherein we are placed.—— Weak minds who make a duty of affliction, and in their lamentations for the dead, lose all concern for the living, are far more reprovable in a moral sense, than such as never affect to grieve at all. There is no duty that enjoins tears for the loss of friends or kindred, on the contrary there is one that commands to restrain them whenever they unfit for necessary exertion. Are the living to pass their time in unavailing mourning for the dead? Promise me, my dear Clara, that if you survive me, *if* I say, for it is not at all

certain; that you will, with the assistance of the Almighty, exert all your fortitude. Shake off grief, as you would sloth, they are near of kin. — Indulge no luxury of tears; but as much as you can, endeavour to supply my place to your brothers, your servants, your vassals and dependants. — Weak persons, sink under grief and misfortunes; the truly great bear up against them; and conquer or stifle their own feelings, to be useful and sustaining to others."

"Oh, my dearest father," faintly articulated Clara, "I will do my best to fulfil all your injunctions, and to imitate you! — but alas! Can I see you suffer? Can I hear you complain? Can I think you worse, and not . . . . . . . . . ?"

"I am not worse, my dear," answered the Baron, "on the contrary,

as to bodily pain, I think myself better: It was a little mental uneasiness, that was the occasion of my restlessness; and which it is in your power to remove."

"In mine?—my dearest father!—Oh name but the means—Oh! you know—You must be certain"—

"I must leave you, my dearest child, sooner or later," resumed the Baron, "to this sad separation we must necessarily submit. Yet, if I left you a protector who could supply my place—Methinks, I could die resigned, nay even joyful."

He paused, she was silent, and he went on; "I know not if you have perceived the affection which that worthy man Mr. Forrest, entertains for you?—he is every thing I could wish in a son and a successor; if I was not well convinced

that you must be happy with him I never would propose him to your choice — you appear averse to the marriage state; I should be sorry to put any constraint upon your inclinations; and were I sure of living as long as you will want a father, I never would offer you a husband; but the unavoidable inconveniencies to which you would be exposed in the case of my death — your brothers too, are so young and so in want of a protector . . . . . . . Mr. Forrest is a man of the strictest probity I almost ever knew, I am sure their interests would be his own. — The young Marquis du Plessis is indeed, another on whom I could depend; for I have had the blessing of two invaluable friends; but he has children, and if he survives his father, will probably reside upon his estate; he could not be the active friend

you would all want and be certain to find in Mr. Forrest. The disposition no less, than the integrity of this gentleman, his taste for retirement and rural oeconomy, render him every thing that I could wish in a representative. — He loves you, Clara, will you refuse to unite your destiny with his, and to make a worthy man happy, when it is so much your interest and my desire? If I live, your compliance will double all my enjoyments; If I die, I shall close my eyes in peace. I shall not leave my children fatherless."

Clara kneeling by her father, gave him her hand, and as soon as she could speak, requested him to dispose of it as he pleased;

" It is enough my good girl, my own Clara, dear image of the wife of my

affections, the saint that was taken from me, unworthy —— but let our friend be called."

"I will go myself," said Clara, and without any other reflection, than that of complying as speedily as possible with her father's desire she flew to find Mr. Forrest. Not in the least suspecting the reason of the sudden summons, he followed in silence to the bed side of the Baron, whose languid features brightened to a smile as he beheld them entering together. Without speaking he raised himself; and taking a hand of each joined them together, and lifting his eyes to heaven, he fervently ejaculated a prayer for their happiness.

Never was surprise equal to that of Mr. Forrest, he thought himself in a

dream, he trembled, he stammered, his quivering lips in vain essayed to utter imperfect thanks. He sunk upon his knees, he kissed the hand he held and that which conferred so unlooked for, so cherished a gift — and as soon as he could find words and utterance, vowed in the most solemn manner to devote his whole life to endeavors at deserving, and of promoting the happiness of an object so worthy and so beloved.

After an hour's enjoyment of the most delicious conversation, the Baron assuring his children, that he should have a good night dismissed them in order to his repose.

He was not disappointed; the serenity he experienced upon gaining a point, the uncertainty of which had long been

a thorn upon his pillow, not only gave him tranquil slumbers for this night; but contributed essentially to the recovery of his health; insomuch that by the time the Marquis returned with a physician; he had the satisfaction to find his help no longer necessary.

The Baron was soon in a state of convalescence and not long ere he made his friends acquainted with the union he had settled. The Marquis du Plessis notwithstanding his generosity, felt a pang for which he called himself to a severe account; it was the agony of expiring passion, reviving at its last gasp, when touched in too tender a part.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

WHICH DRAWS TO A CONCLUSION.

The affairs of Mr. Forrest in order to their final settlement, required his presence in England; he would have set off immediately, to fulfil his engagements, to conclude the sale of his estate, and to have returned as soon as possible with the produce. After a contest of generosity between him and the Baron, it was at length agreed, that the nuptials should

first be solemnized. This happy event soon after took place, with the usual festivity, and under the most favourable auspices.

About a fortnight afterwards, a Lady with attendants, all in deep mourning, arrived at the Castle; and the Viscountess d'Avremont, now a widow, threw herself into the arms of the bride—both wept abundantly.

" Alas!" my dear friend," at length, said the visitor, " what apology can I offer for an intrusion so unseasonable?—Had I been in the secret of your happiness, I never would have broken in upon it, in a garb so unsuitable."

It was soon explained, that a putrid fever had carried off, in three days, the Viscount her husband, in the prime of

life, and at the house of a Lady whose intimacy with him, was not supposed to be of the platonic cast. Madame d'Avremont, shocked at the manner of his death, no less than at the event itself, wept for him with tears of the bitterest anguish; and hastened to spend the first months of her widowhood, where she was so certain of meeting sympathy and consolation.

No other event occurred to interrupt the harmony of these propitious nuptials, which appeared every day to increase.—Time tripped lightly by; and Mr. Forrest seemed to have forgotten his projected journey. His young brothers were the first to remind him of it. "Apropos," said the Baron with a smile, "this same journey seems to be quite given up.

Mr. Forrest, after a silence and hesitation of some minutes, at length ven-

tured to throw out a hint of Clara's accompanying him.

"Indeed," said she, "if my father has no objection, I should like it very much." Her father had, or at least made no objection, and the journey was resolved upon out of hand. It was further settled that Isidore should be of the party; and even that he should be left for a few years in England, if Mr. Forrest could fix him to his mind.

Madame d'Avremont now recovering from her first melancholy, was likewise prevailed upon to try a further change of scene, and join the party. The Ladies had at first settled to travel without female attendants; Therese being on the point of marriage with La Roche, however it appeared that either her curiosity, or her attachment to her mistress was

greater than her love for her suitor; and she requested so earnestly to be included in the arrangement, that Mrs. Forrest, who had left her out, entirely from attention to her happiness, was very easily induced to alter her plan.

No sooner did returning spring smile upon the country, and render travelling over the cross-roads expedient and agreeable, than the party above-described, set off in good health and spirits; leaving however a little void and melancholy behind them.

"You will think of us sometimes, my dearest children," said the Baron, embracing his sons and daughter, we shall never cease to think of you."

He and Basil accompanied them to Saumur, and then, taking a hasty leave, rode

off full speed, to drive away too tender reflections.

The travellers arrived at the hôtel of Madame de Blanville, where they were expected, without accident; that Lady received them with every demonstration of pleasure.

Ha! ha! ha!" said she to her neice, "so, my brother has given me an Englishman for a nephew — Well, if you think, that Madame Forêt sounds as pretty as Madame la Marquise, I have no objection——ha! ha! ha!——and Isidore too; what are you going to transplant him?—poor child!—Well, my brother must do as he pleases; he never would do like other people——I only wonder he does not go to England himself."

She then gave commissions to her neice,

for every thing she had ever heard of, where-in the English were said to excel, particularly for articles in the steel way, from a needle to a watch-chain. Clara promised to let nothing escape her, that was likely to be agreeable to her aunt; and that lady made her a handsome present in valuable jewels.

The party, eager to continue their route, shortened as much as possible their abode in Paris, and proceeded to Calais, where they embarked with a fresh gale which soon brought them to the coasts of Britain. It was however night when they arrived at Dover, when the scattered lights from beneath the white cliffs, give to this town a most singular and romantic appearance. The Ladies thought the houses were caverns practised in the rock; and were somewhat surprized the next morn-

ing to find their appearance so little dissimilar to those on the opposite shore.

Mr. Forrest detained his company a day in this town, as well to repose them after the fatigues of a first sea voyage, wherein they had all been a little sick, as to point out its peculiar beauties. They were enchanted with the view from the Castle-hill, which commands at once such an extent of sea, and so beautiful and variegated a landscape. The wind was just then fair for the ships from the Downs; a numerous fleet had for some time been waiting for it, and the sun shining bright upon the white sails as they glided smoothly and swiftly along, presented to the fair strangers a most novel and delightful spectacle.

"Is it possible they can be all ships!" exclaimed Madame d'Avremont.—In effect,

some of the smallest and most distant, appeared like immense butterflies, skimming the deep—

"Which lightly o'er the surface skim,
"Shewing their gaily *silver* trim,
"Quick glancing to the sun."——GRAY.

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Continuing their journey, they were every where struck with the swiftness and convenience of the conveyances, the excellent accommodation, cleanliness, and good attendance at the inns, and above all, with the beauty and fertility of the country.

Within a few miles of Rochester, the Ladies met with the first accident they had yet experienced on their route, in the failure of one of the wheels of the carriage; it was going up a hill, and did not overset;

and the company escaped for a little alarm. While the servants went to procure assistance; they walked gently on to the nearest shelter, an obscure public-house on the declivity, which however unalluring in its outward appearance, was still more so within.

"This house would almost persuade me, I was transported again into my own province," said Madame d'Avremont; in effect, it afforded a striking contrast in point of cleanliness and convenience, to every thing they had yet met with in England. There was, however, a small garden, with a kind of arbor at the extremity, which boasted the verdure and some of the flowers of spring, and was at least free from the fumes of beer and tobacco; and here the Ladies repaired to wait for their carriage. Therese, who was behind with Isidore, came running breathless to her mistress.

"Oh! Madame, you never will believe who keeps this house — I thought I knew the woman's face; she is thin and altered—but it is Jeannette du Lot—she knew me; she spoke to me, and in French—it is she herself."

Clara returning hastily to the house to be convinced of this prodigy, was stopped on her way by another; a man who was digging unobserved behind the bushes, now stepped forward, and taking off his hat to her, discovered, under some disfigurement, the well-known features of the prodigal Henriot!

Clara ejaculated his name, and immediately recognizing her, he advanced respectfully and convinced her, she was not mistaken.—The first surprize over, which on both sides was not unmingled with pleasure Mrs. Forrest prevailed, poor as was

the accommodation, to stay and dine.—Henriot, who had all the resources of his country people, killed a couple of chicken, tossed them up in a fricasee, found eggs to make an omelette, cut a salad; dressed some sorrel; and in short, served up a dinner, that for the well mingled ingredients of the sauces, and good appearance of the whole; would not have disgraced the first cook in Paris. While waiting upon his guests, he related his adventures, and the occasion of his being settled at such a distance from all his connexions; combining in the narration so artful a mixture of truth and falsehood, so well digested and arranged, like the ingredients of his cookery, neither predominating, that it was as well relished; and procured him with his candid, unsuspicious auditors, at least an equal degree of credit. They paid him liberally, and congratulated themselves on an accident, which had procured them an oppor-

tunity of rendering service to an old neighbour and countryman.

Meanwhile Jeannette had been telling her story to Therese with all the simplicity of truth. She omitted indeed some material circumstances, but adding nothing to fill up the blanks, her relation made so awkward a figure, by that of her husband, which in many points it directly contradicted; that it was not thought worthy of much attention: and Henriot found means while he was serving the coffee, to gloss over his wife's blunders, with as much dexterity as he had his own misconduct.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### A MAIDEN AUNT.

The party pursued their route to the Metropolis, without meeting with any further adventure worth relating; and Mr. Forrest having fixed them in convenient lodgings, they remained long enough to see every thing at all worthy the notice of strangers, and then set off for his estate in Staffordshire. As the bargain for the sale was already made, and the mansion house out of repair; they were received by

a maiden Aunt of Mr. Forrest's at a cottage which had been fitted up for her with every convenience, and which was beautifully situated on a rising ground, commanding a very delightful view. This was the first spot that Clara had seen in that agreeable style of simplicity, which though now become so general, was then but just adopted: she was enchanted with it.

"Is this sweet place likewise to be sold?" she enquired.

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Forrest, "if it is your wish that it should be excepted."

"I really should be sorry," she said, "that it passed quite into other hands.—It seems to me like an asylum from every evil——like an earthly paradise——like Montfier!"

This was enough; Mr. Forrest, who previous to this request of his Lady's, had contented himself with so arranging matters with the purchaser of his estate, as to preclude the possibility of his aunt being molested during her life-time, now determined to sequester this part altogether from the sale. The old Lady, when apprised of it, and that she was indebted for the exception to her neice, became highly prejudiced in her favor.

Mrs. Elizabeth Forrest had always been particularly fond of her nephew: when he was a boy, she was ever ready to excuse his youthful frolics, and to secure him from their consequences; many an imposition had her interference saved him, many a holiday had it procured him; nor did he ever want fruit, cakes, or pocket-money, which it was in her power to supply. The good Lady's kindness had not been wasted

on an ungrateful soil; no sooner was Mr. Forrest master of himself and his estate, than his first care was to the comfort and accommodation of his maiden aunt; whose income was small, and who resided in a country town, where the resources both for company and convenience were very circumscribed.

The cottage we speak of, had been fitted up to her own taste, and under her own direction. A pleasure-ground laid out, and planted with the choicest shrubs, at whatever trouble or expence: The nearest river induced to wander along the bottom of a lawn which sloped to it from the parlour window; a coppice adjoining, latticed round for her birds and poultry; in short, never lover to decorate the bower where he proposed to meet his beloved, bestowed upon it more attention or assiduity, than Mr. Forrest on a retirement for his old maiden

Aunt; while his generous and disinterested cares were probably far better rewarded, by that heart-felt, but calm gratification, in witnessing the happiness he bestowed, which, unlike the turbulent delights of sensuality, is not liable to change or to alloy.

The good old Lady received her neice and friends with a kindness not the less sincere for being rather ceremonious. In habitual and long retirement, she had contracted some peculiarities; but extraordinary indulgence to her servants, neighbours, and animals, was the most remarkable of all. Clara had acquired English enough to converse with her; and Mrs. E. Forrest was delighted to find, that a native of France could be simple in her dress and manners, and decorous in her carriage and conversation; circumstances she would not have believed had she not witnessed; nor was

she unconcerned to observe, on a comparison with Madame d'Avremont, whose deportment, though perfectly unexceptionable, had yet something more of the Parisian freedom, that her neice was one of the most amiable of her country. From approbation to affection in well regulated minds the transition comes of course; Mrs. Elizabeth Forrest was beginning to love her neice almost as well as her nephew, when the hour of separation arrived; the good old Lady was much afflicted, though to repair the void, it had been settled, that Isidore should be established in her house with a tutor to attend him; who being an ecclesiastic, should likewise assist as domestic Chaplain; and that an additional apartment should be added to the cottage expressly for Mr. and Mrs. Forrest, who engaged sometimes to come and enliven it.

A few days previous to the separation, as Clara was admiring the prospect from the parlour window, Mrs. E. Forrest presented her with the following stanzas, which had been written by her nephew, soon after her establishment, during a visit that he paid her; and which being exactly descriptive of the situation, were received with great pleasure; they were as follows:—

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## *SONG.*

Woodbine on the whited side,
 Of my cot luxuriant grows,
Clinging for support and guide,
 To the jessamine and rose.
'Neath my casement rang'd together,
 Thriving colonies abound,
Which from plunderers and weather,
 Many a year have shelter found.

There the waters as they run,
  The smooth shaven lawn below,
Glitter in the noon-day sun,
  Oft at eve fair Cynthia show.
All along the margin growing,
  Pensive willows seek to lave,
And majestically bowing,
  Dip their branches in the wave.

On the adverse bank beyond,
  Softly rises up the steep,
Tufted trees the verdure bound,
  Spotted here and there with sheep.
Here at noon, at ease retiring,
  Oft I shun too fervent rays,
And, nor fearing, nor desiring,
  Tune my reed to nature's praise.

Or the shady coppice seek,
  Thro' my orchard's wicker gate,
Where abides the ring-dove meek,
  Cooing to her faithful mate.
Where at ev'ry spring returning,
  Philomela loves to dwell,
Singing mattins long ere morning,
  Like the hermit in his cell.

When the morn to vigor wakes,
  Ere the sun-beam gives the day,
Faithful Tray his collar shakes,
  Frisks, and jumps, and leads the way.
Over verdant meads I loiter,
  Where the dew yet glist'ning lies,
And reflected in the water,
  I behold the sun arise.

Thus unknowing, and unknown,
  Temp'rate bliss I learn to prize,
Politics I leave alone,
  Sordid interest I despise.
Each to aid is my endeavour,
  Welcome ev'ry friend enjoys,
But my door is barr'd for ever,
  To Intrusion, Vice and Noise.

The party having taken an affectionate leave of Mrs. E. Forrest, and settled Isidore with a tutor of ability much to their satisfaction, made a tour through the

kingdom; visiting whatever was remarkable either for beauty or singularity, and then embarked at Brighton for St. Maloes. Their passage was prosperous; and this route abridging their journey considerably, they reached Montfier while the roads were yet pleasant, as well as practicable.

They found the Baron in good health, Basil and the other children much grown; the Marquis du Plessis, just arrived to winter with his Lady and friends, and Adelaide still improved both in mind and person. It has been remarked that those who have had the small-pox in any violent degree, are usually compensated for the loss of beauty, by an extraordinary share of health, while they have no further ravage to apprehend from time, which rather softens and embellishes, than disfigures. It was thus with our fair Creole; a moderate and becoming degree of embonpoint,

was every day filling up the pits and scars in her countenance, while the vermillion of the purest blood and most perfect good humor, more than atoned for harmony of feature.

As her understanding ripened by experience and improved by culture; she sedulously corrected whatever was yet defective in her temper; and was thus emancipated from the worst of bondage, even that of the passions. The Marquis her husband, thought himself overpaid in her tenderness, good conduct, and uniform cheerfulness, for the sufferings of his first union with her. His honey moon was not at the usual time, nor was it of the usual brief duration—it lasted till death.

The Baron de Montfier lived to a very advanced age; Mr. and Mrs. Forrest always residing with him, in the most

perfect union; blessed with a numerous progeny, and diffusing happiness to all within their sphere.

Basil who had been accustomed to call Constance his little wife, from her earliest infancy, found no ambitious parent on either side to counteract his wishes, and while yet very young, added another happy couple to this patriarchal family.

The senior Marquis du Plessis survived his young wife, but not long; he had no issue by this marriage. After his death, his son and family took possession of his country seat in Poitou, where they resided chiefly, but always spent the winter with their secluded friends at Montfier.

The Viscountess d'Avremont did not return to Paris, but to settle her affairs there; she never engaged in a second mar-

riage, and ended her days in great tranquillity with the society so much to her taste.

The good Curé lived to see the blessings of Heaven so abundantly showered upon his virtuous flock; and was then called to receive the full reward of his pious labours.

The descendants of this goodly stock were still residing at Montfier at the breaking out of the memorable revolution. They were far too loyal and too pious not to be involved in its calamitous effects. In vain were their mountains and seclusion; the fiery sword of persecution drove them unoffending from this second Eden, and pursued them to every shelter. The reader, we hope, will be consoled to understand, that they found an asylum in this kingdom, in the cottage and demesne, which

Clara with a sort of prophetic impulse, had prevailed on her husband to set apart from the sale of his estate.

Du Hamel lived respected to a good old age; it was not till after his death, that his real history was generally known. The particulars being then found among his papers, were at his own desire made public, for the benefit of others. If the reader's curiosity is excited, it may be gratified in the following pages, with which we shall conclude our history.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE LIFE OF DU HAMEL.

Born with a strong sense of natural justice, it has been my fate through life, never to meet with it. — Oh ye, who may chance to look over this history when the unhappy writer is no more, weep for the crimes and excesses of a fellow mortal, and pray to the God of all justice and mercy, for the soul of him, whose frail body now mouldring in the dust, can no longer urge him to transgress the eternal laws of rectitude.

My father inherited from his ancestors a small fortune, and a large share of pride; he traced their lineage from the days of Charlemange, and had sucked with his milk the persuasion, that no advantage was equal to that of a noble birth; that it atoned for every deficiency, while nothing could atone for that. Every means of improving his fortune, he would have thought degrading to his honor — even science and talents; however he could read a little, and write his name. With this his only considerable foible, he had a kind heart, but an ill-judging head, and meaning well, was perpetually acting wrong.

Of three sons I was the second born, and the least favored; yet to do myself the justice he refused me, I was the most toward and the best disposed. But I was grave and taciturn even in childhood: I had none of the winning wiles of infancy;

I never obtruded myself upon notice; if not caressed, I did not caress; if not spoken to, I was silent: my reserve was imputed to sullenness, my bashfulness was called stupidity; and a temper which required kindness and tenderness to make it expand, was checked in the bud by coldness, harshness, and ill-applied severity.—My Brothers had all the levity and vivacity of youth and of their country; they were careless of every thing and applied to nothing; but their mischief was ingenious and their follies more engaging than all my tranquillity, assiduity, and care.

I was naturally studious, and easily acquired the very little required of us; besides my own exercises I usually did those of my brothers, yet this procured me, neither credit nor reward; but if any thing was amiss I was sure to incur the blame; it was "that stupid, awkward Jaques,"

who bore the brunt of all. — Of our few books, toys, or whatever else was intrusted to our management, none of mine were ever lost or spoiled; I was equally careful of my cloaths, but instead of being rewarded for this my good conduct, I had frequently the mortification to see my brothers presented with new things in the place of those they had lost or misused, while I was permitted to retain what I had been so careful of.

I early felt, and felt keenly the injustice of these proceedings; but I had a proud, close heart, and a reserved stubborn temper which never eased itself by complaint, and my parents were, I am convinced, not conscious of any injustice.

My chief friend and only confidant, was an old servant who had lived in the family more than thirty years; a rough blunt man,

who often suffering under the same species of injustice, had a fellow-feeling for me. — Alexis would sometimes venture a word or two in my defence; but he too had but few words, and those were not persuasive; he never obtained a hearing in my favor, much less any redress; however he was my chief companion and only comfort. I used to work with him in the garden, attend him when he went in search of game, and sometimes assist in knocking it down. The family pronounced us a pair of savages, exactly fitted for each other.

I still remember with tenderness and regret, the virtues of this kind hearted domestic, which concealed beneath a rough exterior, were lost on those undiscerning eyes which never looked beyond a superficial surface: — And yet I call to mind many instances of his inflexible integrity, and sincere attachment to my family, as well

as particular affection for me. — Worthy Alexis! I was too young to feel the value of thy native endowments. — I knew not then that justice, probity and disinterestedness are almost strangers upon earth; I could only love and cherish thee, but was far from esteeming thee as thou didst merit: Long since hast thou received the reward of thine humble virtues: — long since hast thou heard from the gracious master,

"Well done, thou good and faithful Servant!"

Alas, in a long experience I have never known thy fellow! —

Alexis having found one day a Bullfinch's nest, brought it in triumph to his young masters; it contained three birds hardly fledged, and we had each one to rear. I was naturally fond of animals and very tender of them; I did not neglect my charge, and the care of them all soon de-

volved on me. The nest was placed in a box on my pillow, and every morning awaking at break of day, at the plaintive cries of my little brood, I fed and nursed them in my bosom; whistling at the same time a simple tune I had learned from Alexis: I failed not to repeat it several times in the day, and the last thing at night. My young nursery throve and grew, and two of them proving apt scholars soon repeated my tune: they were now become objects of great interest to all the family, my brothers claimed their birds, and insisted that the two which piped belonged to them. In vain did I shew them the notch I had marked in the tail of my own bird, and venture a few remarks upon my trouble; my cause was as usual prejudged. My mother was sure "that either of her own dear boys would give their birds to her; but as for that little sulky Jaques, he would keep it in his own room, that no one

might be the better for it;" in short, with my poor little hen bird and my heart ready to burst, yet too proud to complain or to expose my weakness, to give my tears free vent, and to conceal them, I flew to the garden and to Alexis:

"What, has the cat killed your fine piping bull-finches, and left you nothing but that nasty little silent hen, master Jaques?" said the good fellow.

As soon as I could speak, I made known the subject of my affliction: Alexis, who always whistled when he was angry or disturbed, set up the tune I had taught my birds, when to my great surprise, the poor despised hen which had been hitherto so silent, repeated the notes. Alexis now whistled with delight.

"Do not let any body know it, master," said he, "or they will take this from you too."

I accordingly concealed my little bird and her talents with great care. —

On my return to the house, having recovered my composure, I heard it remarked that Jaques did not care for any thing.

"You fancied he would be vexed at not having the choice of the birds left to him, but you see he does not care about it:" observed my mother to my father.

My mother had taken possession of the finest bird, allotting however to Theodore, her eldest son, the charge of feeding and taking care of it. One day that I was in her apartment, the bird seeming to know me, beat violently against the wires of its pri-

sison; I longed to open it, but did not dare; my mother said, I frightened it, and ordered me from the room. Next morning the poor bird was found dead at the bottom of his cage, the glass which contained his food, having been so carelessly placed that he could not get at it, and was thus starved in the midst of plenty. My grief for my *eleve* was revived at the news of his mournful catastrophe, and again I flew to the garden and to Alexis. He had his gun and was going to the woods after game, whither I accompanied him. We did not return till the hour of supper, when as usual I hastened to my room to caress my bird, and see that she wanted for nothing, and as usual she greeted me with her little talent, which she never displayed but to me: my youngest brother had followed me unperceived, and for the first time heard her sing.

"Is that really your bird that would not sing at all, Jacques?" said he; "now that is very lucky; for Mamma has asked me for mine, and do you know I had the misfortune to break its leg and its wing as I was playing with it *very* gently, and it is dead; but you shall give me your's, and pray don't tell, she will never know the difference, as it sings."

I opposed this motion with some steadiness, though less from unwillingness to part with my bird, than from conviction that it would speedily share the fate of the other two, and be the victim of cruelty or neglect. We quarrelled: — the cage was overset, and my poor bird escaping, he knocked it down, and it expired before my eyes. My grief on this circumstance became rather outrageous; I fell upon my brother and gave him some

severe blows; his nose began to bleed, and with this proof of my delinquency fast flowing, he ran to my mother to make his own story good.

From weeping over my dead bird I was summoned to my trial, and found every mouth open against me: the little artful villain had reported, that my bird having died, I had stolen his, and upon his claiming it for his mother, I had declared I would sooner kill it, and had done so accordingly. Indignation for some time kept me silent, and when I would have spoken, no one would hear me.

If I have dwelt so long upon this childish incident, it is that my blood still boils at the recollection, that I could never forgive it, and that it is as fresh in my mind as if it happened but yesterday. Moreover, it

is but a sample of the general treatment I endured.

At the age of fourteen, I was placed as Cadet in a regiment of foot. I was exact in my duty, and not having been spoiled at home, found no hardship in a military life, and soon became fond of it. A young officer whom I shall call Du Mont, courted my friendship, and although of a disposition every way differing from my own, easily obtained it. Unused to be caressed, I was the more sensible of his flattery and cajolements, and highly grateful for them; I did his duty and fought his battles.

When I had been in the regiment four years I obtained an ensigncy and leave of absence, and went with my friend on a visit to his relations, who were, like my own, of a great family and small fortune, and resided in an old forlorn house, called

the *Chateau*, in a distant part of Gascony. Du Mont had two sisters very like himself, that is light, gay and thoughtless: they had spent a few months with their mother at Barêges and had acquired just style enough to laugh at my want of it: At supper, the heads of the family were very inquisitive about my fortune and expectations; and finding I was no desirable guest, treated me rather coolly, my irritable feelings took the alarm; and I past the night in meditating a return to my regiment.

Meantime there had happened great changes in my family, of which I was informed by letter the next day: the regiment in which my eldest brother had been placed, being sent on a foreign station the climate proved unfavourable to him and he died soon after his arrival there: a fit of apoplexy had been the consequence of my

father's grief on receiving the news, and his life was still thought in great danger. I was now the eldest son, and the heir; the family of Du Mont with countenances totally changed, paid me their compliments of condolence, with an air of congratulation; nor was I permitted to depart on my necessary attendance at home, without an absolute promise of returning to compleat my visit, the very first opportunity.

I found my family in great grief, and very sincerely partook in it, for I never was mercenary or selfish; but I was cut to the heart, at the frequent hints too plain to be mistaken, of how much better I might have been spared than my brother.

"Jaques has a strong constitution, and no feeling," my mother would often say; "no change of climate would hurt him;

what a pity he had not been in that regiment instead of poor Theodore!"

As soon as my father was out of danger I returned to my regiment with a heart more than ever estranged from the paternal roof; Du Mont received me with open arms and a thousand professions of regard which were balm to my wounded spirit, and of which I never for an instant doubted the sincerity. A plan was formed for another visit to the *Chateau*, which was put in execution the following year.

On my second visit to Du Mont's family, I met with a most cordial reception; the mother caressed, the daughters distinguished me: but there was a young lady passing with them the first year of her widowhood, who soon made me blind to every one else. I hardly observed whether or not she was beautiful; I overlooked her features in

the character of sweetness, of sentiment and modesty which they seemed to express; and this too would perhaps have made but little impression, had not her intelligent eye continually addressed this language to me. In vain Du Mont courted her attention, and endeavoured to divert mine to his sister; she was repulsive to him and but too alluring to me. Frequently would she blame his idleness and levity; and indirectly flatter me, by ridiculing every thing that I was not. Sometimes she threw out hints of the unhappiness of a first marriage imposed on her by her relations, and often would she talk like an angel of that union of hearts and congeniality of sentiment, so rarely to be met with, yet so necessary to render the marriage state happy. Many a time with a delight unknown to me before, have I surprized her beautiful

eyes fixed on me, and thrilled at the air of conscious timidity with which they were so hastily withdrawn.

The interesting widow affected solitude; she walked alone in the extensive gardens, and even in the woods; as I was accustomed to do the same, we not unfrequently met; the walk was prolonged unperceived by either of us; our silence was even more delicious than our conversation; for all the encouragement I had received had not yet emboldened me to talk to her of love. Du Mont perceiving our good intelligence and piqued at his double disappointment, would frequently rally me, and turn into ridicule the soft sorrow, and sentimental tenderness of my adorable widow: but equally in depreciating her merit, and exalting that of his sisters did he talk to the winds.

On the eve of our departure to join the corps, I gathered courage to declare my sentiments in a tender and respectful billet; it was favourably received, and we engaged in a correspondence, which it was agreed should be secret, and which I swore, and firmly believed should be lasting. Of marriage it was in vain yet to think. I was many years short of my age of freedom according to law; my father was now recovered and as likely to live as myself: —in short, we parted with many tears and vows of fidelity.

Our regiment was soon after called out upon active service; I flew to the onset with all the ardor of youth, and was so happy as to distinguish myself and to escape unhurt. My Commanding Officer promised me promotion; I thought myself secure of it, and wrote to my

widow as confidently as if my expectations had been realised. At the end of the campaign, and after several bloody engagements we returned to winter quarters, and the commission I expected was given to a youth of eighteen, who had never seen any service; while to add to my vexation I could perceive that my disappointment was a subject of malignant joy to many of my comrades. I was not beloved in the regiment, for my temper was unchanged; I still affected reserve and was neither gay nor social. I was of none of the parties of pleasure or debauchery; I was sober in every thing, and even chaste; this austerity of conduct, joined to the regularity with which I fulfilled every part of my military duty was perhaps my greatest offence: for no censure is so severe or so unpardonable, as the silent reproach of superior good conduct.

After three years additional service, I at length obtained a Lieutenancy: My Julia was constant; I writ to her continually and flew to her whenever I could leave my duty. Du Mont still flattered and still carressed me — I thought I possessed the faithfullest of friends — the tenderest of mistresses — Blissful days! — I was deceived and I was happy.

The war continuing, our regiment was again sent to take the field, and for more than a year I never saw and seldom heard of my Julia; the bustle of service allowed me however, but little leisure for vain regrets; our regiment was in continual motion, and in the famous battle of Malplaquet, in 1709, almost cut to pieces; my Captain fell by my side, I commanded my company and had the good fortune to save our standard at the imminent hazard of my life. I was

severely wounded sent with other officers and men to the nearest quarters; but every one congratulated me and assured me my fortune was made. for my own part I had not the least doubt of it, — experience had not yet taught me wisdom and as soon as I could hold a pen, I communicated my golden prospects to her upon whose account they were chiefly valued. Soon after our skeleton of a regiment returned to France, where the first news I heard was the death of my father. I contrived to take the abode of Julia, in my way home. She received me with great tenderness, and we agreed that our marriage should be solemnized as soon as the first mourning for my father was over. — My heart beat high as I drew near the paternal roof, where I was now more than ever an alien. On my first entrance no one recol-

lected me, and this circumstance, howeve accidental it might have been, damped my spirits more than I can express:—Yet that thrilling, indescribable delight with which the feeling mind ever beholds the scenes of its nativity and early youth, soothed my stubborn soul and mingled somewhat of enjoyment with my melancholy. —— My mother called me Monsieur, and received me with a coldness and distance that chagrined, though it did not surprise me; her first question was, "how long I intended to stay?" and the next, "If absenting myself from my regiment might not be attended with inconvenience?—

I missed Alexis; he was grown old and infirm and had been discharged. I flew to seek him. He was lodged in a miserable hovel, one side useless with palsy, and stretched upon straw. Both

wept and both were silent. He seized with his yet remaining hand, mine which I held out to him, he lifted up his head, thanked Heaven with an expressive eye, sunk upon his pallet and expired. I followed him to his grave a true mourner; and the very next day, disgusted with every thing, never once enquiring into the state of my affairs, I hurried back to my Julia for sympathy and consolation. She, on her part, had some prudent questions to put to me, as to the rent-roll of my estate, what ready money I had found in my father's strong box, and to what of the moveables I was entitled? — Of all these things I had not even thought, and my widow assuming a countenance, such as half an hour before I should have thought it impossible to her to wear, chid me with some asperity, and we parted not quite so tenderly as we met.

With a heavy heart, I repaired to Lisle, where our regiment was then quartered.

"Where have you been, *Mon Lieutenant*? how could you absent yourself at such a critical time?" said my serjeant to me, "here has been a promotion in which you are quite left out."

I speedily found that my friend Du Mont, availing himself of my absence, had contrived by the most unfair means to usurp my claims; and had obtained the commission of which I thought myself so secure — in short, that by some strange misrepresentation, neglect or fatality I was the only officer unrewarded. During my unfortunate journey, my comrades had not been idle, they had found friends to interest themselves at court. While I was absent, silent and forgotten.

My disappointment was in proportion to my hopes; soured beyond all command of myself, I quarrelled with the whole corps and after fighting with several of the officers, threw up my commission in disgust. This rash step was hardly taken when I received notice to return home, as business of the utmost importance, required my presence there. Still Julia's abode was in my way — she had heard the news first.

When my father married my mother, he was a widower; but he had lived with his first wife a very short time and was well known to have had no child by her. Nevertheless a man had presented himself pretending to be the issue of this first marriage, and claiming the inheritance.

Julia seemed much alarmed; I was not at all so; I told her, what I had often

heard at home, that my father's first wife had died within six month's of their marriage, and certainly had left no child. But Julia looked grave, shook her head, talked of the chicanery of the law, and once more we parted like man and wife, rather than lovers.

I found my mother ill, and under some uneasiness; she had however her own small fortune secure, and whatever my father had left of ready money or valuables was secreted. Thus, without friends, money or experience, I found myself engaged in a vexatious and expensive law-suit, of which however I did not doubt a favour-ble issue.

My younger brother Lewis, had by this time taken orders; he was placed in the church merely to obtain a provison; it was not at all his inclination, nor indeed was any of our family remarkable for piety.

For two years that my cause was in agitation I remained at my estate, occasionally visiting Julia, who always found some pretext for delaying our union, and who would often contrive to be from home when she had reason to expect my visit.—Relying on the justice of my cause, I left the whole management of it to the lawyers, and amused myself with hunting and other country sports, without trouble or anxiety for the future. Du Mont sometimes spent his congé's with me; for he had contrived so well to gloss over his having superseded me in the regiment, that we were as good friends as ever. My mother had removed to a provincial town, where she found a second husband, and where my brother Louis had obtained a benefice.

In the midst of my security and peace, the sentence of the Parliament of Paris,

giving my inheritance to a stranger and an impostor, came upon me like a thunderbolt, and crushed at once my hopes with my fortunes. The successful client had made it appear that my father's first wife had been delivered of a son privately, about six weeks after their marriage; that the child was baptized and regularly entered in the parish book of St. Sulpice, at Paris, and the register signed by both parents; that it was placed at nurse in the neighbourhood, but never noticed or acknowledged by the father after the demise of his wife: in short, witnesses were suborned to prove this man the child in question; I was frustrated from my inheritance and condemned to account with him for the produce of my estate from the death of my father. A more adroit person would have pursued this matter further, and perhaps have obtained a reverse of the sentence; instead of which, cursing the law

and the lawyers, I left my home and flew to Julia, never doubting to find shelter, fortune, love, and happiness with her.—— She had lately inherited a good estate. —What a fortunate circumstance!—She could prove her disinterestedness, and my loss would not be felt. Thus ingenious in deceiving myself, I accosted my fair widow with such a cheerful air that I deceived *her*.—She thought I had gained my cause: How did her countenance alter, when informed of the truth!

"Where are you going?" she cried, "you cannot stay here!—this is no time to talk of love or marriage—you should hasten to Paris, and see what is to be done—or rather you should have gone before—what can you have been thinking of?"

Stung to the soul at the coldness of

this reception, I left her without a word of reproach or of adieu; and hastened to Du Mont, to seek in friendship the relief I had so vainly hoped in love. But Du Mont was absent; Du Mont had obtained *Congé* upon affairs of moment, and was not to return in less than three months. I followed to his home — the family were absent too, and soon I learned the cause; they were gone to be present at the nuptials of my false friend, with my perfidious mistress!.....

This last stroke filled up the measure of my misfortunes—I had no longer any tie to a world that had so misused me; yet detesting that, I still adhered to life. With a heart stunned almost to insensibility of its own feelings, I set off my horse a hard gallop, urging the poor animal till his strength could hold no longer; I was then constrained to allow myself

and him a little rest; but again I travelled on at full speed, flying from recollection and myself for three days; stopping only when my horse could not proceed, resting only on the ground, and subsisting upon the wild gifts of nature. At length I found myself in the midst of a thick forest, I knew not whither; I alighted, and suffered my horse to graze, while I sat upon the grass oppressed with stupor, and unable to ease my swoln heart even with complaint. I remained in this situation all night, insensible of the inclemency of the weather, and the want of food and shelter; wearied nature at length asserted her rights, and I fell into a deep sleep. When I awoke the sun was high, and my poor horse lying down at a little distance, I mounted him and strolled gently along through the most difficult ways, wherever it was possible to force a passage. Again I wandered the whole

day, without better support than the preceding: towards night-fall I was surprised with the sound of steps and voices: these indications of humanity were oppressive to my ears and seeking to avoid them, I endeavoured to penetrate still further into the entangled brakes and underwood; but my horse impeded my progress, though I had dismounted and was leading him: still feeling attached to an animal that had carried me through all my campaigns, and had been for several years a faithful servant, I threw my arms round his neck, exclaiming: — "No! I will not leave thee!"

And now for the first time, giving vent to the agony of my soul, in a paroxysm of grief no longer to be restrained, I wept and lamented aloud. My emotion betrayed me, and proved a guide to the persons I

had heard; they approached me unperceived, and enquired in no very tender accent the cause of my complaints; I thought them robbers, and such is the strong adherence to life, that miserable and abandoned as I felt myself, I drew my pistols and prepared to defend mine: they were three in number, and one coming behind me, secured my right arm and obliged me to surrender. They prepared to rifle me, and I found that bad as my state had been, it was still capable of being worse. As they were disputing whether or not they should murder me, one of them recognised my features.

"It is my worthy Lieutenant!" said he, "the best of officers and most honorable of men—had all the corps been like him, I never should have deserted it—but to be condemned to unjust punishment by scoun-

drels I despised, my temper never could brook!"

I shook hands with this man who had always done his duty under my command; — a parley ensued; they invited me to partake of their provision; we sat down on the grass, and as we supped, compared our misfortunes. They told me if I would undertake their command, I should find myself at the head of about a dozen brave and determined fellows, who would know no will but mine, and would make war with me upon that world which had first wronged and then driven us from it. They knew of a secure retreat, and after an hour or two's repose we set out in quest of it. The next day we arrived at the recess, and immediately took possession. Our first care was well to secure and to conceal every access to it, and for this Nature had done so much, that it cost us

but little labor. My companions had connections at a convenient distance, who supplied us with all things necessary. Our numbers increased, and we soon became formidable.

That this way of life was agreeable to me I cannot say; I despised my associates, and lived as much alone as the nature of my connexion with them would allow. I had however succeeded in persuading myself that I was guilty of no injustice. That natural sense of right which leads every one to give a just award when self is out of the question, mere morality, philosophy, and what the world calls honor, when not established upon the firm invariable rules of Christianity, are all buildings without foundation; incapable of withstanding the winds of adversity, or the mines of temptation.

The slight impressions I had received at home on religious subjects, had speedily been erased in my military career, when such things were only mentioned to be ridiculed. I formed a system of justice and virtue that suited my convenience and circumstances, as alas, we are all too apt to do; and acting up to that, thought myself an honorable man.

In this false peace I long lived, and every day ran the risk of dying; but a merciful Providence did not abandon me, and even permitted the fall of an angel to save me from the abyss in which I was plunging: for I shall always consider the arrival of Louisot among us, as my recall to virtue: hardened as I was, I long resisted the impulse——Oh, how gracious is the power that at length has roused me; surely it must design to be ultimately merciful!

Reader, let not my history encourage thee to tempt omnipotence. Few are those that have been so favored, but let it teach thee, however misused by fortune or the world, never to distrust in Providence, never to despond; never to deviate from the strict and unvarying line of rectitude. When forsaken by man, have recourse to God; seek for consolation where alone it is permanently to be found, and remember who has pronounced, "Those blessed that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

FINIS.

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